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REV. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A.

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## EVANGELICAL PREACHING.

It is a common charge against the Nonconformist ministers of the day that the character of preaching has undergone a very material change, that in general it is less doctrinal and more ethical; less definite, and more vague and uncertain; with less of direct and earnest appeal to the conscience, and more of intellectual fancy and speculation—that, in short, the evangelistic character of the pulpit, if it has not been sacrificed altogether, has been kept in the background to such an extent that numbers of Christian professors are in danger of forgetting that the primary work of the preacher is to proclaim the “gospel of forgiveness.” Would that it were possible to meet this impeachment with a categorical denial at once complete and explicit. But after comparing the testimonies of those who have larger opportunities for judging than preachers themselves can possibly have, it is not easy to resist the conclusion that there is a measure of truth in these allegations. The defect may not be as extensive as they represent, and certainly does not indicate that loss of faith, which, with a lamentable want of charity, is inferred from it; and there have to be set over against it some very high qualities on the other side; but it cannot be denied, and ought not to be ignored.

At the very beginning of these observations it is necessary to emphasize the fact that a preacher may be severely orthodox, and yet far from evangelical in his pulpit ministrations, not only lacking in the full statement of the doctrine of the cross, but even more in that sympathetic

tone and fervid zeal which are of the first importance in any one who is to be a winner of souls. The Free Church of Scotland is supposed to be the favoured home of orthodoxy, and if there be one part of the country in which that orthodoxy is regarded with more profound veneration and guarded with more intense jealousy and even with more watchful suspicion than another, it is in the Highlands. Yet often as we have worshipped in Highland churches, it has seldom if ever been our good fortune to hear an earnest evangelical sermon. There was not the faintest reason to suspect the orthodoxy of any of the preachers, and it is more than possible that they would have detected some laches in ours. They were simple-minded, godly men, old-fashioned in their theology, and exclusive in their sympathies, as enamoured of their own Church, and as satisfied of its authority, as is any High Church Rector in an English village of his place in the true Apostolical succession. They could doubtless have stood successfully any examination in the doctrines of grace, and would not have stumbled at the hardest test which could have been imposed upon them; but so far as our experience went, and it was not inconsiderable, they seldom preached what they so surely believed. Had there been any controversy in relation to doctrine, they would have been found earnestly contending for the "faith once delivered to the saints," and though they would not have gone so far as the worthy divine who suggested that the parchments which Paul had left behind at Troas must have contained the original draft of the Confession of Faith and the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, they certainly would have maintained that in these formularies we have the "truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The curious fact was that they so seldom sought to bring that truth into contact with the consciences of their hearers. We had extraordinary pieces of exposition, especially of chapters of the Old Testament; curious discussions of such interesting points as the twelve stones which Joshua erected in the Jordan; unctuous references to the privileges of the Lord's dear people, and the like; occasionally fierce denun-

ciations of heretics, especially any who had been carried away by the attractions of science ; but of appeals to the conscience of sinners, or proclamations of the grace of God, either in its message of forgiveness or in its teachings that, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, men should live soberly, righteously, godly in this present world," there was a lamentable deficiency.

These references are not made with the intention of casting any reflection on the men, still less of depreciating the character of the noble Church to which they belong, but only of rebutting the suggestion that a lack of the evangelical element in the preaching must necessarily be due to its absence from the creed. These preachers would not have yielded to Mr. Spurgeon in the matter of soundness, and yet it must be confessed that the food they gave to the people, who surely needed the bread, was hard and dry as the stones. The reason might possibly be that they attached an exaggerated importance to what they regarded as instruction, and thought too little of the imperative necessity for awakening dormant consciences, warning sinners who were deluding themselves with the idea that all must be right with those who held the creeds and observed the ordinances of the Church, and of proclaiming to inquiring souls the glorious gospel of the grace of God.

It may be that we, in this country, have fallen into a similar error. One indication of it is the excessive craving in many quarters for missions and mission preachers and the success which continually attends the labours of such men. Albeit, there may be nothing in the character of their ministry which at all explains the results which are realized. Far be it from us to suggest that men of this order are not necessary. A class of "Evangelists"—men doing the sort of work which the Church of Rome commits to select preachers—having it in charge to visit different parts of the country simply to "evangelize" might be a mighty power in the land. There is nothing in the principles of Congregationalism to prevent the creation of such a class ; though there is very much in the circumstances of the churches which would make it difficult unless such men were also

pastors of churches, who secured freedom for this wider service by having efficient assistants in their ordinary pastoral work. This latter arrangement has very much to recommend it, and if wisely carried out might have an incalculable effect in promoting a revival of religion throughout the country.

But even this plan would have attendant disadvantages if it were supposed that the evangelists at all relieved the pastors from the discharge of this special duty. Every minister ought to be an evangelist in his own pulpit, and unless he is so, the benefit to be derived from these occasional visits of men consecrated to this special work would be very materially diminished. It is to be feared that there are not a few who forget this, and who, as a matter of fact, neglect this most important section of their work. They are so anxious to build up Christians in their most holy faith that it may be they sometimes overlook, what is also only too true, that to a large number of their hearers that faith is not a reality and exercises no power over them. There are those who assert that our congregations are honeycombed with unbelief; that the monthly Reviews have sown broadcast the seeds of doubt; that the audacious dogmatism of evening papers which write as though their able editors had received a commission to remodel religion and politics alike has so far told upon others that they have a vague dream of some new Evangel. The picture is, to say the least, very much overdrawn, but it must be admitted that among our congregations there are numbers who answer to the description given by Isaiah, and applied by our Lord to the men of His day. They draw nigh unto God with their mouth and worship Him with their lips, but their heart is far from Him. They are well instructed in the doctrines of the gospel, and it may even be that they regard themselves as believers in them, the fact being that they have never devoted so much thought to them as to entertain any doubt. The heart is not with the gospel, the gospel is not in the heart. There are Christian professors in all churches of whom this is true, and still more is it so of those who attend our

places of worship but remain outside Christian fellowship. Ministers who live in their studies, or move only in circles where there is so much of respect for them and reverence for the truth they preach as to restrain freedom of utterance on doctrines and churches, little understand the utter indifference with which the most sacred truths of our religion are regarded by many, even of those who show an apparent interest in the work of the Church. Could they realize it they would assuredly give up the idea that the principal work was to build up, and would feel that it was necessary to be continually laying afresh the foundations in the proclamation of that simple message which everywhere was the burden of the Apostolic teaching—Christ Jesus and Him crucified.

Even in the case of devout Christians themselves, there is occasion for the continued repetition of truths, which indeed are familiar, but which, to those who are possessed by them, have not lost their value or their attractiveness because of their familiarity. The more devout in spirit, the more simple-hearted in his trust, the more advanced in the Divine life, a Christian is, and the more intense will be his interest in the truth which has been blessed of God to his own soul. He knows his own weakness and so does not turn away with scornful indifference from warnings as to the deceitfulness of sin. Every day he is made more conscious that it is by the grace of God he is what he is as a Christian, and he finds new strength as he listens once more to the exceeding great and precious promises which assure him that that grace can never fail the soul which seeks it. Jesus Christ, the author, must also be the finisher of his faith, and it cannot be that he can hear too often of Him, even though it be nothing more than the renewal of the first and simplest message of His love.

There are two or three reasons which may help to explain the mistake into which many pastors fall by overlooking these needs and cravings of all devout hearts and in seeking to cultivate a mode of preaching which may at first appear more suited to those of advanced Christian experience.

They are offended (a stronger word might be used with perfect truth) at the feeble platitudes which are palmed off upon us as the simple preaching of the gospel. We have to-day a number of good men whose zeal outruns their knowledge who think themselves called and qualified to preach the gospel. Such an idea would never have occurred to any one else, but it has taken such full possession of their minds that they never doubt as to the Divine commission which has been entrusted to them. They do not profess to be ministers of the gospel, and have a noble disdain of those who are, holding them to be fettered by professional etiquette, and in their secret hearts probably regarding them as mere hirelings. Let it not be supposed that we are speaking out of any feeling of jealousy to lay preachers, or any disposition to underrate their work. On the contrary, we attach immense value to the free, earnest unconventional teaching of a man of business, who has the courage to tell the world of what he himself has tasted, and felt, and handled, of the good word of life. He looks at the subject from a standpoint of his own, and can speak with a freshness of illustration, and a consequent independence and force impossible to one whose whole life is spent either in his study or in the special work of the Church itself. He knows men of the world as ministers cannot know them, sees them in their times of *abandon* and unreserve, hears them criticise Christianity and Church work in a style which they certainly would not employ in the presence of ministers, and if, having had such an experience, he holds fast by the faith and supports the profession by a blameless and noble life, he has a power which any minister might well envy. The testimony of such men could not fail to produce a strong impression. But they must be men of intelligence, of sobriety of thought, of practical judgment, and of broad sympathy, united with real enthusiasm. To such men a hearty welcome would certainly be extended by all faithful ministers of the gospel. Or, on the other hand, if there be plain, unlettered men, with native shrewdness, which has been sanctified by the grace of God, who preach the gospel of Christ, it may be in rough and

rugged language, but with a fervour and a force which are the fruit of their own intense conviction, who would not thank God for those who prove themselves able ministers by their power to awaken the conscience and to move the hearts of men. Would to God the Lord would multiply such prophets. The one qualification which we ask in the preacher is manifest power to preach, in thought however simple, in style however homely. But we decline to regard the repetition of a few phrases, without attempt at explanation or illustration, as preaching. An address of this character, to which it was our misfortune to listen, will not easily pass out of our memory. The speaker was a man of considerable social status, the sincerity of whose piety we should be the last to question. His address consisted of a number of sentences, loosely strung together, in which the central truth of the gospel was being continually repeated, with hardly a variation in the phraseology. It was all true and good, but there was not the faintest attempt either to expound the truth or apply it to the hearers, and yet this was regarded as the preaching of the gospel. But even this was of a higher type than some of the discourses delivered by officers of the Salvation Army and others of the same calibre, who seem to forget that a faith, to be strong and enduring, must be intelligent, and who, in fact, act as though their appeal was to be made, not to reason or conscience, but to emotion and excitement, and the more loud and noisy it is, and the more devoid of all sober thought, the more likely is it to be successful. The injury which these free-lances are doing to all Churches, by creating in many good people a distaste for the quiet and orderly work of the Church, and, indeed, engendering an aversion to Church institutions in general, is beginning to be understood by many who at first heedlessly extended to them their patronage, because of their belief that they were doing valuable practical service among the estranged masses. But the more serious mischief they are working among the people by the lowered conception of preaching and of the nature of conversion which their practice fosters, is as yet very imperfectly realized. In



fairness it must be added that ministers themselves are partly responsible for these extravagances. Had they given more prominence to the evangelistic element, there would not have been this tolerance for teachings so eminently unsatisfactory. There is a widespread and not unnatural feeling that the Church has not been sufficiently aggressive nor the power of the gospel to convert souls sufficiently manifest. Hence any who seemed to be doing a neglected work have been welcomed by those who were weary of the decorous respectability which, in their judgment, had become a substitute for the burning zeal of sincere piety. The sympathy which numbers, including some of high Christian character and intelligence, have shown even to the vagaries of the Salvation Army, ought to be a lesson and a warning. The only way in which the pulpit can vindicate its own position is by proving itself to be a real force for the conversion of men, and this can be done only by an earnest and faithful preaching of Christ crucified.

It is not surprising however, if, on the minds of some preachers, the effect of these movements has been to drive them into the opposite extreme. Offended by the contempt put upon thought and culture, and the praises lavished upon some wild, extravagant, and unintelligent presentations of the gospel, they have been anxious to escape from this fault, and that anxiety has betrayed them into a mistake hardly less serious. In their distrust of appeals to mere emotion and of the sudden conversion which they are supposed to work, they have been tempted to forget that the primary object of their ministry is to convert sinners, and have insisted, perhaps too strongly, upon the truths best fitted to correct the excesses which they deplore. Hating sensationalism, and perhaps too much under the fascination of culture, they have unconsciously drifted into a neglect of pure evangelistic work. It would be grossly unfair to infer that their neglect is due to any disbelief in the gospel as the mighty power of God unto salvation. They err not in the matter of their personal faith, but in their conception of the best mode of preaching. They assume, and no doubt correctly, that their



congregations are acquainted with the doctrine of the cross, but they forget there is a need for a constant presentation and enforcement of it by such arguments and persuasions as are best calculated to confute the doubt, arouse the indifference, and quicken the spiritual thought of their hearers.

This is the course which should be taken, if only to counteract the evil done by teachers who seem to think that their sole business is to arouse excitement, and whose exhortations to faith are so lacking in any vivid exhibition of the evil of sin, or any adequate conception of what is intended by believing in Christ, that they serve only to bring into contempt the most glorious doctrine of the gospel. The true way to meet that surely is not to allow the preaching of that doctrine to fall into desuetude, but rather to overcome the evil by the good. If the truth has been caricatured, the more imperative the necessity for the return to a truer and more scriptural mode of teaching. Very possibly it may not be popular, but unpopularity is a small thing to face when service has to be done to Christ and His gospel. Granted that no one is less likely to please men than a preacher who displeases alike those who want intellectual novelties on the one side, and on the other those who are crying out for emotional excitement. Still, if he feels that his duty requires him to resist the extreme tendencies of both, to preach the Gospel and the Gospel only, but to preach it so that it shall enlighten and convince the understanding, expose to the heart its own deceitfulness, and bring home to the awakened conscience the message of the Divine love, he must do it at whatever cost. It is required of a steward, not that he be prosperous in the administration of his trust, but that he be found faithful, and in a minister of the gospel, faithfulness means the exercise of all the best faculties of his nature, in order that he may so preach that men may believe and be saved.

It is a grave fallacy to suppose that such preaching implies any neglect of intellectual quality. The exhibition of the old truth which is familiar to all the hearers, in forms so

fresh as to attract and command the attention, puts a more severe strain upon mental power than the starting of some new philosophical theory. It is easy to dazzle by the very audacity of some speculation, which has an air of originality about it, and is recommended by a certain glitter of style. To awaken a new interest in a common theme, to deal with consciences which are in danger of becoming seared by means of truths which they have for years resisted, to rouse men from that spiritual apathy into which we are all too prone to fall, and to do it by considerations and arguments to which they have become only too well accustomed, is a much more difficult achievement—it is hardly too much to say the most difficult which any man can undertake. Even in politics, the interest of men would soon be exhausted if a speaker had to be continually handling one theme, and had only the same repertory of arguments from which to draw all his reasonings. As it is, though events continually supply new illustrations, and though the feelings of the hearers are strongly in sympathy with the speaker, yet there very soon comes a weariness of any subject which has for a long time a monopoly of public attention. But the preacher of the gospel has to deal with men who hate the message which he has to repeat to them. He has to contend against their unspiritual tone and temper, against their preoccupation with the innumerable things of the present life in which they are interested, against their disposition to doubt and cavil, and against the listless indifference in which they are too prone to indulge. And he has to do all this, to compel attention to an unwelcome pleading, to awaken a slumbering heart, to sweep away the obstacles which hinder the reception of truth, by the repetition of the "old, old story." To prepare a dreamy and tender poetic essay, to discourse with eloquence on some literary or ethical question, to analyze the character of some great author or hero, or illustrate some epoch-making event in history, is surely a much simpler and easier work than so to set forth the simple facts in the work of redemption as to compel men to yield their hearts to God. The combination of simplicity with power is

very rare, and in every department as valuable as it is rare. But it is nowhere so hard to attain as here when dealing with truth familiar to all. But it is the heart rather than the intellect which the preacher has to affect, and he who could succeed in this gives an evidence of power far beyond that which is shown in any "enticing words of man's wisdom."

There is a growing desire to set up a wider conception of the function of the pulpit by insisting that its influence shall be made to tell upon all departments of human character, and all phases of human life. To a certain extent this is commendable. The ethics of Christianity need to be expounded and enforced with great directness and earnestness. It is not desirable, nor is it expedient, that a Christian preacher should use the brief opportunities he has for instructing men in the things of the kingdom of God, and for beseeching them to submit to its rule, in discussing schemes of social reform, still less in airing his views on some political controversy of the hour. It is his duty to set forth the great principles which underlie all the problems of daily life, and by which all ought to be ultimately settled, but even these ought not to have an undue prominence in his teachings. The temptation with many has been to repair the neglect, as they esteem it, of former times by continually insisting upon these forgotten aspects of Christian duty. It has been a grievous mistake, and grievously have they answered it. But it is a mistake committed as the result of a very pardonable endeavour to give a more complete idea of Christian life. That ethics should have a distinct place in the teachings of every pulpit will not be denied by any reasonable man. But if proof were necessary it would be furnished in abundance by the unhappy consequences which have too often resulted from the adoption of an opposite course. A divorce between religion and morality is sure to inflict injury on both. It seems almost incredible that Christians with the New Testament in their hands, could ever suppose that there could be any genuine piety where there is not moral goodness. But alas! the cases are not so uncommon

as could be desired, in which men who have had a high reputation for orthodoxy and religion have been living lives of fraud or immorality; and the saddest feature in the whole is that they have been unconscious of the glaring inconsistency, not to say flagrant dishonesty, of their position. That Christian preachers should seek to guard against such misrepresentations of the gospel by insisting that the will of God is our sanctification, and that sanctification means righteousness and temperance, as well as godliness; or that, in the presence of so much strange delusion on the point, they should be somewhat persistent in their testimony on the subject, is not surprising. But they will certainly fail, even in their own object, if in their inculcation of duty they are not careful always to find their authority, their sanction, and their motive in the cross. The preaching of duty may be intensely evangelical, and ought to be so. What we are and what we do is for Christ's sake. He who exhibits duty in its connection with our obligation to Christ, need not fear that he will be reproached for throwing to the people the dry husks of morality, instead of giving them the bread of life. These two departments of Christian teaching ought never to be regarded as separate from, much less as being antagonistic to, each other. They are, on the contrary, mutually dependent. The more fully the obligations of Christian life are expounded and realized the deeper will be the sense of dependence, and the more earnest the prayer for that grace by which alone we can be able to reach such an ideal. On the other hand, the more we are possessed with the thought of our Lord and our Master, of all He is to us, and all He has done for us, the more intense will be our desire to glorify Him by seeking conformity to His will. The more sincerely we love Christ, and the more shall we love His brethren and ours, the fuller will our hearts be of charity and our lives of active and self-denying goodness, the sterner the resistance we shall offer to temptation, and the more diligent our pursuit of the things that are pure, are honest, are lovely, and of good report. To preach the gospel without preaching morality, in all its varied aspects, is impossible; for we

cannot love the God we have not seen, unless we love our brother whom we have seen. Morality is only the exhibition of that love. But in vain shall we follow after this goodness unless the grace of Christ be our strength, as Himself is our example, and love to Him our inspiration.

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## DEAN PLUMPTRE'S DANTE.\*

By this work on Dante, which may well be described as gigantic, Dean Plumptre has done to literature and to all cultivated men and women a benefit not easily estimated. It is with no common feelings of reverence that we approach a book containing the ripest thought and austere study, the religious convictions and literary enthusiasms of a thinker and scholar during thirty years. Dante's influence has entered far and wide, to a degree we are none of us conscious of, into all the national thought and life of Europe, into our own domestic and private lives, into even our individual thoughts, prayers, aspirations, and imaginings, till to eliminate it is like trying to eliminate the influence of the New Testament or that of Shakespeare. We enter into the heritage of thought and imagination of the ages, ignorant of where we add to or simply repeat the ideas of somebody else, and the very costermonger in our streets, though he may never have heard the names of Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, is touched subtly, inconceivably, divinely, by their magic influence. To say this is to acknowledge not only a never-to-be-paid debt to Dante, but a debt also to Dean Plumptre for so ably assisting us to a right knowledge, estimation, and appreciation of the poet of all time.

We say "assisting," because it would be, indeed, ungrateful to withhold acknowledgment to the older friend of our childhood, Cary, whom Dean Plumptre confesses still

\* *Dante*. By DEAN PLUMPTRE. 2 vols. (Isbister & Co.)

"to hold the field;" certainly no one else in England, and only Longfellow in America, has ever pretended to be in possession. This last translation of Dante, which we have before us, goes further in pretension and perhaps in attainment than either of the other works. The ideal—that of producing Dante's verse in his own *terza rima* instead of plain English blank verse—is higher, though a doubt may be raised as to its even possible achievement, but at least it may be said that he will be a brave man who follows in Dean Plumptre's own line, and tries to do better. After perusing carefully the two volumes before us with their masterly and scholarly translations, the exhaustive life of the poet, the critical and elaborate studies of the poem, the collection and summing up of everything that every one (worth hearing) has had to say on the subject, the estimates of Dantean influence on European and American nations generally, we are left with the puzzled thought, whether any one else will ever have anything fresh to say on the matter, or if he have, the courage to say it.

The life of Dante is always debatable ground. Like a figure in a dream he stalks a wanderer, always a wanderer, through the world, cut off, almost from childhood, from the sacred loves of home, held in tender affection by men, and yet standing from them afar on a lofty pinnacle, scanning with gaze of poet and prophet and visionary the heavens and the life of man, following an ideal of love that he himself does not understand; a man taught, and guided, and inspired by the Eternal. His face, as by pictures it has been imprinted deathlessly on our imaginations, surrounded by its laurel crown—which seems to have been accorded to him ungrudgingly by his fellow-citizens even in boyhood—is the sad and worn one of a pilgrim-visionary on earth, the face of a man who, in a very deep sense, had been in hell. But side by side with this dream-figure Dean Plumptre has placed another, no less beautiful, and more real and human:—"A child of quick eager intelligence, with dark, glancing, melancholy, dreamy eyes, with hair of the golden auburn . . . asking many questions and saying strange things, devout with a child's devotion

to the Virgin and the Saints, especially St. Lucia, learning his Latin grammar, probably at the Abbey School, in the *Manual of Donatus*." The young man of keen, artistic temperament, sportive and gay at times like a little child, betraying here and there signs of that indomitable will and purpose, of that reticent pride, and deep, hardly-to-be-controlled emotion, which distinguished him afterwards; a youth drinking to the full of life's enjoyments, revelling in music and in art, in science and in literature, with companions of like artistic sensibilities; as much at home in the lecture halls of Bologna, Paris, and Oxford, as in the picturesque streets of Florence, and the lanes and fields where he drank in inspiration from floating clouds, the songs of birds, the shifting lights and shadows on water, sky, and land; open to all natural influences, with a mind and heart too keenly alive to outside impressions to be haunted by the fear of those long years of exile, loss, and sorrow, that were to follow. No wonder that Dante, with his beautiful impressionable nature, the dark shadows stretching across his life, ever darkening towards the close, his quest of the spiritual and the ideal to be ended in a vision of God Himself, has seemed to us at times a figure like unto that of Christ, who, too, dashed and wrecked His life against an Ideal that He might lead men to the Perfect Righteousness.

But Dean Plumptre has shown us that Dante was not alone, as we have been tempted to think him, a poet, an idealist, an artist, and spiritual mystic; he was also a man of action, taking part early in his life's history in the politics of his native city; nay, sought out, and placed in high public positions of trust and influence. According to the ordinances of the city he was thirty before he entered on any public function; but from 1296 to his embassy to Rome in 1301, from which he never returned, he was constantly employed in civic affairs, which show us, at any rate, the opinion his fellow-citizens had formed of his abilities. For the involved politics of the time, the quarrels and jealousies between the different parties, the Blacks and Whites, the quarrels on a larger scale of the



Ghibellines, the imperial, conservative, and autocratic party, as opposed to the Guelphs, the Papal, popular, and liberal party, we must refer our readers either to Dean Plumptre's pages, or to some more detailed narrative; they can have no place in a short article like the present. Dante's family, being of the wealthy burgher class, always supported the people as opposed to the nobles; afterwards, when the pope's interference and rule became too crushing to the freedom of the city, we find Dante joining hands with a new Ghibelline party on the side of liberalism and civic independence. The struggle between the pope and the Florentines came to a crisis when Dante was prior of the city in 1300, resulting in Dante's banishment. To try and conciliate parties he went on an embassy to Rome, when the headstrong pope and the still more headstrong poet came face to face in a never-to-be-forgotten, curious meeting, in which neither would give way.

But Dante the lover is better known than either Dante the poet or Dante the politician, and Dean Plumptre has much to tell us about that relationship between the poet and Beatrice which has excited so much comment, and round which so much of the romance and poetry of Christendom has gathered. Opinion has hovered between the two extreme views of Beatrice, one regarding her as a poetic fiction, a beautiful ideal of the poet's brain; the other as an ordinary woman, on the ethical bearings of whose relationship with the poet there is some grave doubt. The Dean seems uncertain on the subject, in one place saying: "To us the relation seems perilous, tending to crime, if not actually criminal, certain to end in a scandal or a tragedy, in the *cause célèbre* of the Divorce Court or the Assizes"; but he reminds us that Dante never, even after he had been purified in the Holy Mount, looked back on it with any feelings of shame, which he scarcely could have failed to do had there been sufficient cause. We must remember too, that the highest ideal of the Middle Ages was a woman, culminating in the Madonna herself; and that man's highest and best dreams, his loftiest chivalry, his most sacred poetry and art, were intimately associated



with woman. Then again, the man on whom the highly-wrought poetic influences of his time were working was himself a poet, peculiarly open to such influence. When we remember all this, we surely need not speak of such things as Divorce and Assize Courts in connection with Dante's name, who, more than any other, has carried reverence for womanhood and spiritual purity to so high a level. Beatrice became more and more of a dream, a mystic vision, a passionless ideal, as the years went on; though, to start with, his love for her was real and human enough. To doubt its reality would be utterly to misunderstand all those years of crushing sorrow, of baffled struggle, of heart-broken disappointment, of fiery discipline, through which he was made capable of being the singer and religious teacher of Christian Europe. Certainly, neither in poetry nor actual life are there scenes which more seize and impress themselves on the imagination than those connected with the history of Beatrice and Dante, for ever immortalized in the "*Vita Nuova*," the new and higher life of love, from the time when he sees her first a golden-haired child of nine to when in paradise she appears far above him, and he utters his prayer of thanksgiving to his lady who had cared for him through the murky darkness of hell, and the glimmering twilights of purgatory, and prays:—

Still keep me for thy great munificence,  
So that my soul which owes its health to thee,  
May please thee free from each corporeal sense.

But Beatrice has only "a loving smile" for answer, and then

Turned to the Fount that flows eternally.

The earthly passion of love, the earthly ideal of love, is swallowed up in a supreme thirst for God and rest in the Spiritual Presence.

The turning points in Dante's life are more or less connected with his love for Beatrice; though no man can spend his years "in sighs and sonnets," all his thought and action converged towards one idea, that of doing something worthy of the woman whom he loved. Aroused and fired

as a child by this deep-seated silent passion which had no expression in outward act or word, he found in his ideal the stimulus of his life. Her marriage and afterwards her death both in a large measure *made* Dante the poet, and it is this influence which Dean Plumptre traces for us so carefully through the "*Divina Commedia*."

Dante's relations with his wife, Gemma Donai, are still in the region of conjecture. That it was not a happy marriage seems clear, in spite of the evidence our author cites to the contrary. Most Italian writers of that and later date are agreed that Dante's home was not a happy one, whatever "steadiness in pursuit and action" it may have induced; though, to judge from after results, Gemma must have been a careful and devoted mother to his seven children.

After discussing the historical personality of Beatrice, we are told "that the other chief question at issue" is "the ultimate devotion and earnestness of Dante's faith." . . . "Was he a devout catholic or an infidel wearing the mask of Catholicism?" Surely the best answer is to be found in Dante's work, where, if anywhere, a man's real faith, and not merely his church creeds, is to be sought. Looked at from the point of his relations with the world and time, the question of the orthodoxy of his papist faith is one of trivial import, utterly set at nought by these others, Was he earnest in his thirst for God, and to how full a degree was his thirst satisfied? And surely to these the "*Paradiso*" is sufficient answer. That he did pass through phases of religious carelessness, sometimes verging on scepticism, induced by his scientific studies, and the influence of the Schools, is probable enough; but for us it is satisfaction to know that his faith in the Eternal Righteousness and the Eternal Love came out at last victorious.

Much interest attaches to Dean Plumptre's careful and elaborate "*Studies*" of the "*Commedia*" itself, comprising the "genesis and growth" of the latter, followed by investigations into the origin of the influences bearing upon its three divisions, and some striking remarks on the reasons for the poet's choice of language, form, and title,

and the relations of the "Commedia" to Dante's other works, "Vita Nuova," "De Monarchia," and the "Convito." For the sake of those readers who may not have access to the Dean's volumes, we will give briefly the substance of his teaching.

The first germs of influence, which afterwards produced the Christian poem of Christendom, were sown in the fertile soil of Dante's imagination in childhood. All religious thoughts, fostered by mass and sermon, by Church bell and organ peal, by all the outward picturesque formalities connected in those early ages with the practice of piety, worked on a mind naturally alive to spiritual mysticism.

Then the entrance of his lady, of his beloved, to the eternal glories "behind the veil" would deepen and nourish such religious thinking. His studies of the classics would make him familiar with their weird, often grotesque representations of the nether world. But after all, what can we know about it? While following the Dean in his "genesis" we are conscious of its utter insufficiency, and feel as to the real why and wherefore still as far removed as the poet questioning "the little flower in the crannied wall." There are some things, let us confess it at once, that we cannot and we would not know, which, in their utter unknowableness, bring us nearer to God and the heart of all mystery, than anything demonstrable by the "exact sciences."

The language Dante chose in preference to the Latin more generally used by scholars and *literati*, was his own beloved native tongue, which he delighted to honour. By its use who can estimate the gain to Italy and the world? Not only was Italian at once raised to the rank of a literary language, but the great work, instead of rusting, as might have been its fate, on library bookshelves, was made familiar in the mart, the home, and the Church. And the language was embodied in the peculiarly sweet and striking form of *terza rima*, so much more easily rendered in Italian than in English, though even in the former it is not without its difficulty, and it was this difficulty, as well as its adaptability to continuous narrative, which made Dante, as the Dean tells us, decide on its use.

The reason for the title "*Commedia*" (meaning village song) is yet more interesting, and is to be found fully in Dante's epistle to Can Grande. The work is called *Comedy* rather than *Tragedy*, because the first, according to rules of dramatic art, begins with sorrow and ends with joy; the latter begins in gladness and ends in trouble. Therefore it is comedy as being at once simpler, wider, and homelier in its range, on which Dante's choice falls. The epithet *Divina* has been attached to it by later writers.

The whole poem in its three divisions of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise embodies, while enlarging on, most of the ideas forming the groundwork of that exquisite idyl of love, "*Vita Nuova*," the ideal of a perfect monarchy of imperial unity, "*De Monarchia*," and the intellectual philosophy of "*Convito*" (the banquet). It represents the whole range of the poet's studies, of the growth and development of his mind, of the purification and increase of stature of his own soul as it grew nearer to God in the light and bliss of paradise. We may go very far astray in it for allegorical interpretations, but in a very beautiful and true sense it is an allegory from beginning to end, but an allegory of truth and human experience and Divine love. The *Inferno* must have been begun at a certain memorable Passioneide when Dante was in Rome in 1300. In the grim horror of its imagination, in the awful terror of its retribution, in the unmitigated despair, and anguish, and sorrow, which there hold iron sway, it has by some people been considered the finest of the *Cantica*, though it is evident Dean Plumptre's opinion is in favour of Purgatory. More than the others it bears the stamp of the age with all its heat of controversy, its relentless judgments, its fury of fanaticism; and Dante, in his belief of himself as being pre-eminently the Poet of Righteousness, is not behind his age in condemnation of sin, and merciless punishment of the sinner. The imagery and many of the allusions are classical, its ethics are those of Plato and Aristotle rather than of Christianity.

With Purgatory came the first glimmer of hope, the glittering on the waters of the light radiating from

Paradise; its entrance is guarded by the angel with the naked sword—"the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." It must be entered by three steps—the first of white marble with the mirror of self-knowledge; the second, "black, rough, coarse, and cracked," is self-mortification; the third, "of fiery porphyry, crimson like blood," is the glow of burning love, typical, perhaps, of the Supreme Love which triumphed on the Cross. Pervading the whole of Purgatory is a subdued yet tranquil hope, growing clearer and clearer in its dawning to the perfect day. The poet puts into it all the bright visions which filled his own soul at the crowning of the Emperor Henry VII., to the glory and success of whose reign he was looking forward so ardently; but there is here no trace of the unexpected dashing of his hopes to the ground by the emperor's subsequent death, which points significantly to the probable date of this portion of the poem. Dean Plumptre considers it to be the most distinctively autobiographical of the three; it certainly bears witness to considerable growth of Dante's spiritual nature, there is a new religious and Christian tone about it. Instead of the old classic Virgil, the poet has passed to the guidance and care of Beatrice, the embodied form of Heavenly Wisdom. He sees under her influence the exceeding sinfulness of his own soul, and makes in deep humility his confession of the stains on his past life, his departure from his first love, and the forsaking of his earlier and purer visions. The work of Purgatory is finished by the washing away in the waters of Lethe the bitter memory of the past, to be followed by that other mystic river which has the power of bringing back to the poet's mind the remembrance of every good deed done. Then the poet realizes, not only how God has all along been guiding him, but recognizes also his faithlessness and want of loyalty to the Hand which has led him.

Now and only now is the poet ready to begin his ascent into Paradise. He enters it still under the care of Beatrice, who leads him on from planet to planet, and then, without farewell or warning, suddenly leaves him, and he finds

himself with the saintly Bernard, symbolic here of the heavenly theology.

The *Paradise* is the most scholarly of the three portions of the poem; it shows the widest study, the deepest thought, and the ripest experience. It speaks the voice of an old man, more and more being weaned from all earthly things, and yet looking back in his sad exile with lingering tenderness on the haunts of childhood. It is a bold attempt to unite the widest visions of astronomy with the hallowed dreams of religion of saintly souls through the ages. It presses home at the same time the truths of science and the truths of orthodox theology, blending into one the influences of Roger Bacon and Thomas Aquinas. But Dante's theology, as we should expect in that of a poet-soul divinely taught of God, goes somewhat further than that of the Schools. It breathes a wider hope for the sinner, a tenderer compassion for the judged; it admits into its *Paradise* the spirits of unbaptized infants, and of the unknowing, unconverted heathen; it represents God as the centre of all worlds, of all planet systems, the ultimate goal and end of all human life, God of God, Light of Light.

In this mighty sweep of vision, taking in a whole universe as it centralizes round its God, we should expect and find that the poet's own identity becomes more and more absorbed in his heavenly dreams. Beatrice, too, begins to be less of a person and more of an abstraction, until everything earthly is forgotten and lost as the poet's purified gaze is able to rest on the Eternal Light and the Triune Deity.

Dante's life-work was over, and when in 1321 he died, still an exile, at Ravenna, he seems to have anticipated that that work was too great to perish, that henceforth it would be an indivisible part of the world's life, but he could scarcely have anticipated the fame it would achieve. Not many years after his death there were extant innumerable manuscripts of the "*Commedia*," which, of course, were still further increased with the invention of printing. The greatest minds of that and succeeding ages delighted to do

him honour. Villani, Boccaccio, and Petrarch bear their testimonies to his genius. Professional chairs were started to study his work. Artists delighted to put on canvas his ideas, and there was not a nation in Europe which had not its translations and commentaries of his work. In our own country, Chaucer was familiar with him, Gower, Lydgate, Raleigh, and Sidney were largely swayed by his influence, but the two men of greatest note in our literature, Spenser and Shakespeare, knew little or nothing of Italian, and therefore, probably, nothing of Dante. But both in Italy and in England, for reasons difficult to specify, Dante's fame, from the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century, suffered an eclipse, only to shine in our day with still greater lustre. True genius never grows old, and Dante is one of those master minds who belong to all places and to all time. Peace be to his noble, restless spirit; he lived true to his own light, a stranger and pilgrim on earth; he is now an exile and wanderer no longer, his weary feet stand for ever in the Father's House.

RUTH BRINDLEY.

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### AMONG THE VILLAGES OF SOUTH INDIA.

*From the Andover Review.*

OH, the balmy bliss of these early November mornings! It is the iuxurious life of the tropics, softened by the touch of ocean, cooled by the breath of far-away winter.

Somehow I have seemed to be in the South of Africa, rather than of India. The low state of these aboriginal tribes is perhaps the cause of this.

What they call the port of Tuticorin is, like other harbours on this Eastern coast, far out at sea, almost out of sight of land. But they bring us ashore in boats, and then follow the visits to these villages, which are among the most striking features of India.

First come the gala days at Palamcottah, the centre of the Tinnevely mission. The festivities are in welcome of Mr. Wigram, Honorary Secretary of the Church Missionary



Society of England, who, with his son, is making the same tour as I, in reverse order. Being in his company, I share a little of the glory of the occasion, and, best of all, of the company of Bishop Sargent. Fifty-seven years he has served, and his heart is as young as his years are ripe. One evening we are shown how the native evangelists preach their singing sermons, singing with a low, instrumental accompaniment. The next morning over two hundred native helpers—pastors, teachers, evangelists, &c.—gather and make known their work and their wants to Mr. Wigram. There is a call for more earnestness in the religious teaching of the schools, and for better theological training.

At night I find myself in a bullock-bandy, a kind of two-wheeled, covered family carry-all, without seats, entrance from behind, with mattress spread on the bottom. Every few miles the oxen are changed. We make about five miles an hour. I remember the palm-trees, the tropical skies, and the jolts. And I remember the warm Scotch greeting of the Duthies at Nagercoil the next morning. Thirteen Bible women come to the verandah and tell about their work among heathen families. Then twenty or thirty poor wives and widows seat themselves in double rows along the veranda, take out their pillows, pins, and thread, and show how they make all kinds of that beautiful lace which is a specialty of the Travancore mission, and for which Mrs. Duthie receives orders from all parts of the world. Close by are the flourishing school for girls and the mission seminary. Across the road is the great church, where on Sunday I speak to eight hundred native Christians. Mrs. Murray Mitchell describes this work in her book on Southern India. But I can tell no more, for I am in the Madura mission, and it is of these villages I wish to write.

The city of Madura, with 75,000 inhabitants, is a centre of Christianity, as it is one of the centres of Southern Hinduism—that strange compound of philosophical pantheism with the idol-nature and devil-worship of these primitive tribes. Who that has seen it will ever forget the gorgeous, sickening splendours of the Madura temple? It is wonderful for its thousand-columned hall and grotesquely



carved monsters; still more wonderful for its stately ceremonies, its stone gods, its slowly striding elephants, its oily priests, its devout and superstitious worshippers.

Three miles away is Pasumalia, where the large mission school for boys is undermining the temple. On Sunday evening while I spoke without an interpreter to the students, nearly all of whom were Christians, it seemed as if the future leaders of their country were listening, and soon put their thought into regenerating deeds. How can I omit to speak of that mission compound in Madura where are so many dear friends, and where I found such a delightful home? My theme, however, is different. I had seen schools and churches, and churches and schools. But these were results, the ultimate of mission work rather than its very beginnings. The distinguishing feature of the Madura work is that it is a country mission, well occupied by one-family-stations distributed in the midst of crowded villages. It was the itinerating work among these villages that I wanted to see, so here I am at Battalagundu, far away from the railroad, or any other mission station.

A typical place. Over yonder the Indian village. Here, just outside, near enough for work, far enough for quiet, the mission compound. This is the centre from which proceeds every variety of mission work, into which streams every form of heathen need. In front is the lawn, surrounded by flowers, shrubs, and tropical trees. Here lawn tennis may sometimes call our friends to much needed recreation. The most noticeable thing about the bungalow is the great encompassing veranda. It is the room of all work, the gathering place of the family and the schools, the border ground, or neutral zone, between the privacy of home and the publicity of the street. It happens to be a birthday, and here the friends and school-children file up to present congratulations to the ripe missionary matron—and their limes. Each brings a sample of this simple, refreshing fruit until the large basket is filled. It makes a better lemonade. Here the girls sit at their sewing in the afternoons. And here, when they are gone, we discuss missions and home, and—Andover.

Just back and on either side are the two schools, the boys' school, and the girls'. They are entirely separate in their living and studying. Mrs. Hume, in Bombay, has the only co-educational school I found in India.

In front, to one side, is the little oblong box of a church. It is whitewashed, has two or three chairs, mats on the floor for seats, and an American organ. Yesterday I saw about a hundred and fifty people sitting on these mats, singing, worshipping, listening while I talked. The singing was good. Sometimes it was American music, perhaps of Moody and Sankey, perhaps "Johnny comes marching home," with sacred words. But it was best of all, to my taste, when they sang their own native music and lyrics.

The children are fairly intelligent, and especially graceful and amiable. I have never seen women more queenly in their bearing than some of these Hindus, who have always carried burdens on their heads. Never shall I forget the dignity with which, in a women's meeting which I had addressed in this same church, the pastor's wife rose to her feet,—which were bare,—her Indian cloth gracefully thrown about her, and with open face and noble mein uttered a few words of thanks to those at home who had sent missionaries to help the women of India.

Our first visit outside is at *Bethany*, called a Christian village, and containing about a hundred and fifty inhabitants. We drive into a cluster of perhaps thirty low, mud-walled, straw-thatched hovels, tumbled indiscriminately together with narrow, winding lanes between. Word has been sent that there will be a meeting, and the people are collecting at a hovel, whose only distinction is that of being a little larger than the rest.

Here we, too, stop, *for this is the church!* Better than the lodgment of the infant Christ, no doubt. A mud wall, whitewashed within and without, though needing another coat, incloses a space twenty-five feet long, ten feet wide, seven feet high, and covered by a thatching of straw resting on a bamboo frame.

Within are a chair, a table, and a box. That is all,

except a few pieces of matting on the mud ground. For windows, holes in the wall on three sides, a door being on the fourth side. This has been made by the Christians, with the help of their heathen neighbours, at a cost of about twenty dollars.

Some of the men before us have left their work and come from a distance to attend this noon meeting. Soon we have about forty persons, all outcast Pariahs, seated on the ground before us, the men on one side, the women on the other, and children on all sides. The men are not over-burdened with clothing, but the women wear a decent covering of red or white cloth.

Three men have learned to read, and two women. Several of them are Christians, one man being a Roman Catholic. But most of them are heathen, although they have given up idol-worship and the heathen marks. One obstacle and another prevent their coming to Christ, though not to church.

It is natural enough, I suppose, for us at home to imagine that when these people are converted, they are not so very unlike our own converts. But the new life here is in most cases a mere germ hidden away in filthy, ugly soil.

There they sit, these Pariahs, hovering on the confines of light and darkness, their dark skins symbolizing their condition. They sing; we talk; I tell them how far I came to see them, and how much farther Jesus came for their sake. Mr. Chandler speaks of death, and of Christ's death for them. I ask if they do not want something better for their children than heathenism, and one or two reply that they do.

Then Mr. Chandler turns to the women and asks if they have kept from using bad and angry words for the last few days. They are shy and make no answer, but one or two husbands speak up saying *their* wives haven't used much bad language. Mr. Chandler proposes that all who are willing to promise for the next week to refrain from cross and filthy words should hold up their hands. They talk together, but make no reply. Then I say to them that

when I go home I want to tell my countrywomen that they have made this promise. After some hesitation nearly every hand goes up. We have a little more talk, the native pastor offers prayer, and all quietly disperse.

Mr. Chandler tells me that in closing up a native Christian's affairs after his death, he found in his diary such entries as these: August 7th. "To-day I beat my wife." August 25th. "Beat my wife again."

When one faces these people in their ignorance and degradation, assertions as to their future state seem hazardous, and much of our speculation about it a mockery. One thing is certain—that the best of such heathen are sunk low down in darkness, animalism, dulness of mind and deadness of soul, and it is only the infinite, redeeming, regenerating love of God that can make anything out of them. Their weakness is greater even than their ignorance, for some who come to see and admit the truth of the gospel—like many in our own land—are deterred from accepting it by the great obstacles in the way. The cost seems too great. They cannot see the infinite gain.

Then we visit two other villages. In one of them, where the missionaries have been unable to establish a preaching station, an educated Pariah, who could not succeed in starting a school in Bethany where he lived, asked leave to come and make an attempt on his own account. As a result, with a little help, he has a small shed of mud wall and matting roof just opposite his own cottage, where he teaches his own children with some heathen boys. I photographed the two hovels, with the ragged urchins standing around in mingled fear and curiosity.

Another morning we have a noon-service in a village rejoicing in the name of Ammapatti, where a bell on the roof awaits a tower to hang in. The audience is more high-toned and intelligent than the one in Bethany. They have been expecting me, and one after another comes up, makes his salaam, and presents me with a fresh lime, which it seems is the thing to do. Nearly all are Christians. The sermon consists of a talk, with questions and answers. This is hand-to-hand fighting with heathenism.

A few houses away is the Roman Catholic Church, and just beyond, the Hindu temple. The former they call the temple of Marie; the latter, that of Mariam, or the hideous goddess, Kali. Many are said to patronize the two interchangeably.

The Pariahs and Pullars, the lowest of the castes, are thrust out on the outskirts of the mud village, usually on the east side. These castes shun one another as much as they are shunned by all. The lower down they are, the more they make of their differences. That is human nature, I suppose.

To-night I am still deeper in this village work. I have left that dear patriarch, Father Chandler; and Rev. J. P. Jones, the genial, earnest, and successful leader of the work in Madura city, has come out to meet me at the railroad station, Sholavanthan. It seems strange enough to itinerate in Indian mud villages, close to a busy railroad station. But Indian village life is one of the most fixed of institutions. Some of these railroads have been built in a straight line, in the belief that, as elsewhere, the village would stretch out to meet the railroad. But the villages seldom move. They are built close to the source of water supply, and that concerns them more than does the locomotive. The consequence is that the village population of India is hidden from the ordinary traveller, who sees little more than parched plains and crowded cities.

A short walk, however, brings us into a town of eight or ten thousand inhabitants, mainly Hindus, with a sprinkling of Mohammedans. As I write, we are passing the night in a mud and thatch box of a building, which serves as a school-house, prayer-house, and rest-house. A cot-bed has come out from Madura for me, while Mr. Jones sleeps in the bullock-bandy, his travelling-hotel. The house-servant, who is an excellent cook, supplies us with food prepared at a little heap of coals which he utilizes as a range. This tropical climate has the strange effect of making me hungry and ready to eat once in every three or four hours through the day.

We had been expected here, so arrangements had been made for a little reception. As soon as we had seated ourselves just outside the prayer-house, the girls of the Hindu school came marching up, two by two, to the number of twenty. They deployed before us, then recited their verses in the Tamil language, told Bible stories of Moses and other worthies, and disappeared. Soon a sound was heard which seemed to be that of the Scotch bagpipes. As it came near, we saw no kilts, however, but Indian clothes, and the music resolved itself into the notes of horns and drums. One of these instruments I have learned to call the *unicorn* or monotone, because it sounds but one deep note as the accompaniment to a polytone, another wind instrument which is rich in several notes. The tam-tam, a dull sort of bucket-drum, is struck with either stick or finger, and does an astonishing amount of business.

Behind the band came two boys, one bearing a huge bunch of the celebrated plantains of this neighbourhood, the other with a plate of pomegranates and more plantains. After them came others with garlands. Then the boys of the school and a mingled company of Christians and Hindus. They salaamed, hung the chrysanthemum garlands about our necks, carried the fruit within the house, and—American-like—called for a speech. My companion enlarged upon my travels, expressed my thanks, and called upon the boys for Bible verses.

It was strange enough to see those Hindu boys stand there in front of their Christian teachers and recite verses which are dynamite to Hinduism, while their Hindu fathers looked down approvingly, and even urged them on when they hesitated. These men with the sacred ashes striped across the forehead would have nothing to do with Christianity, and would persecute their children if they accepted it. Yet they encourage them to attend the Christian schools. There are 136 such village schools in this Madura mission, with 3,700 scholars, of whom only 580 are Christians. They are steadily undermining Hinduism, but the fathers, in their desire to secure some education for their children, are apparently blinded to these results.

After a short prayer-meeting in the house, and a consultation with the four helpers, we sally forth for street preaching, the two Europeans followed by the helpers walking through the business street, and stopping at a central point. The fiddle strikes up, and several Tamil hymns are sung.

The numbers of men and boys about us grow to a crowd with a few women on the outskirts. Soon we have between two and three hundred pressing close upon us. One helper speaks earnestly on our wretched condition as sinners; another, on the need of a Saviour, breaking out into song as he speaks. The third describes the way to the Saviour, and the fourth talks about Christ. My friend sums up the whole, and translates my testimony as one travelling around the world, who has discovered no land without sin, and has found only one Saviour.

Many thoughts came to me as I watched this quiet and attentive throng of listening Hindus. The people are accessible and friendly, and there should be hundreds of such services where there is now one. Although most come like the Athenians, from curiosity, a few are interested.

After we had given tracts to eagerly outstretched hands, a man, who had heard that the Bible contained an account of this religion, offered twelve cents for a copy, which he soon afterwards received. A few years since most would have been afraid to take even a tract.

Then we walked through the town, and, passing from the Pariahs and Pullars, came to the Brahmin Street, broad, quiet, clean, shaded by cocoa-nut trees. There was a mark of distinction as plainly impressed upon it as upon an old aristocratic New England village, like Litchfield or Northampton. Intellectually, socially, and physically, these Brahmins are far above the common people.

Going to another village we had noon-service. Then the bandy went on to Madura, and we across country, through the rice-fields, attended for some distance by the native Christians, who guided us through the flood, and carried us in their arms across the muddy rice-fields, where there was no path, until we reached the railway station.



The subject of the missionary prayer-meeting at Madura that night was, "The hindrances to spirituality in the life of the missionary." Nearly every one in the room spoke. I was let into the heart of this strange, struggling, glorious life. At four o'clock the next morning, while most were still sleeping, I was on my way farther North. It was another of those unmatched Indian mornings, which come to the earth as cool and soft and fragrant as the touch of an angel's wing.

I am now writing at Dindigul, in whose vicinity I have just attended a church dedication. How like, yet how unlike! There was the congregation, Solomon's dedicatory prayer, and other services as at home. But the church was another mud and thatch oblong box of a building, with three holes in the walls for windows and a fourth for the door, a hard mud floor, with seats for the pastors and the guest, and mats for the congregation of forty sitting on the ground.

The building cost twenty-five dollars, four-fifths being given by the natives. It could not hold more than fifty or sixty persons. But it was clean, new, well whitewashed, and decorated with sugar-cane stalks, young cocoa-nuts, plantain buds, and other productions. We were garlanded as usual, and presented with plantains, limes, betel-nuts, and leaves. An intelligent, well-clad company of men, women, and children, were before us.

The whole service was memorial, a bright spot in the midst of heathen filth, hatred, and superstition. That many in the village are nominally Roman Catholics does not seem to make any difference. The gospel has not taken hold of them, and the heathenism appears the same, only using the cross for its superstitious sign.

We were escorted in and out of the village by the band with its three instruments, as before, the monotone, the polytone, the tam-tams, and the bagpipe effect,—all this while passing along the dry sandy bed of a river, and through fields filled with that cactus curse, the prickly-pear,—emblem of heathendom, while above was the cocoa-nut for Christianity.



My host at Dindigul is Dr. Chester. It would be hard to find a better specimen of the enterprising, many-sided, yet thorough, determined, and well-trained Yankee,—that Puritan class who, having colonized the rocks of New England, now sail forth on other more modern May Flowers in order to evangelize the world. He is system and punctuality personified, with nothing of the pedant. I have visited his hospital, where even the high-caste men seek his help,—for high caste does not avert disease,—his schools, his English service for the English community, his dispensary at Madura, which he visits once a week, and his outlying congregations. Sunday morning, after an early breakfast, we started at about seven for a village church where we were to hold Communion service. It was difficult to reach, as the road, part of the way, ran through bushes of the prickly-pear, and we were obliged to walk a good deal. But at the needed points, some native would meet us, and taking the box of books and the Communion service, would guide us on our way.

The village contained about forty houses, two-thirds of the inhabitants being Protestants. They are of a caste a little lower than the Vellalas.

The people seemed intelligent, and they have an excellent native pastor in Mr. Colton, who told me that he observed February 22nd as a day of prayer for America, and who sent his greetings to our Sunday-schools and Young Men's Christian Associations, and also to our fathers and mothers.

In the Sunday-school a man was pointed out to me, who, years ago, in order to gain merit, vowed to wear his head in an iron cage until he had built a certain water-tank. While thus bound and cramped, a Christian catechist talked with him. The man was convicted, took off the cage, became a Christian, and moved here, where he now does evangelistic work. The cage is in Boston, in our missionary rooms.

On this morning a man brought a special contribution of two and a half rupees—about one dollar—the price of a ram which he had sold. It was a most interesting occasion,

and as I spoke to this little flock, and the Lord's Supper was celebrated, precious memories thronged upon me of the meeting of the American Board in Boston and of its Communion season.

When we left the village the people accompanied us a mile on the way, and then brought half a dozen young cocoa-nuts which they opened to give us the milk. The native deacon reminded Dr. Chester for the hundredth time that the trees which bore them had been planted at the very time when he began to preach to them years before. I told them, with my thanks, that my people at home could not have furnished me with such a drink.

These itinerating visits have opened up most strange and important phrases of the mission work. India is a land of rural populations. That population in South India is largely aboriginal, of Dravidian stock. Their villages are among the most primitive and fixed of social institutions. Each village seems to be a compact mass of Hinduism, with all its ignorance, superstition, caste-feeling, pride, and bigotry. But those icy fetters melt before the breath of Christ, and the first genuine native Christian who abides in his village becomes a new social centre, about which slowly organizes itself a reconstructed community. The centre enlarges to a Christian Christ, the hovels become Christian homes, the community a Christian village. Is not this the way in which India is to be won for Christ?

EDWARD A. LAWRENCE.

*Dindigul, Southern India.*

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## CONCERNING THEATRE-GOING.

### II.

IN order to a correct appreciation of the bearing of the law of Christian expediency upon theatre-going and a number of other similar questions, it is necessary first to inquire what that law is. It is in the very nature of things that

it should be incapable of exact definition. It has to do with the application of great principles to varying conditions and circumstances, and cannot therefore be reduced to a number of formal precepts. The early Christians, notably those of the Corinthian church, were anxious to have minute directions on a number of those practical questions which were not determined by the law of moral right and wrong, and referred them to the Apostle Paul. Nothing could be more instructive than his reply. Ecclesiastics would very probably have formulated a code by which every separate point would have been regulated. The Apostle lays down great principles by which the individual conscience is to be guided in shaping its own decisions. This is the Divine method of leading men—the instructing and guiding with the eye—and it is as presumptuous as it certainly is unnecessary to insist upon its transcendent superiority to mere human expedients. Still this is evident. Had Paul done as his Corinthian friends would fain have had him do, his teachings would have had little practical value for us. The difficulties which agitated the Corinthian church belong entirely to the things of the past, and the apostolic judgment upon them would have for us but little more than historic interest. The principles of Christian life and character apply to all times and to all diversity of circumstance. The difference between the two systems is this. In the one case the Apostle would have condescended to the level of a mere director, after the fashion and in the spirit of the Jesuit; in the other he is a great spiritual teacher, whose one aim is to quicken the conscience, and to help in its education.

This education of conscience is just what is needed at the present time on these subjects. It is half amusing, half painful, to read some of the comments which this discussion itself has produced, as though the question were whether a certain freedom is to be granted to Christian professors and ministers in this matter of worldly amusements. The underlying suggestion, of course, is that there is some authority to whom belongs the prerogative of putting such restrictions upon the liberty with which Christ

has made His people free and of removing them at pleasure. Now if Paul declined to accept such an office, and discharge so invidious a duty, there is certainly no one to-day who can lay claim to any power of the kind. If liberty is to be thus brought under limitations they must be imposed by the man himself, under the pressure of his personal obligation to the Divine Master. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind ! exercising his own judgment with the clear recognition that he is under the law to Christ, and that the deciding element in his verdict should be a supreme regard to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is to be feared is that this is the very point which is too often ignored. The old system of restraint has broken down, the fallacy of some of its contentions has been exposed, the injustice of its pretensions to authority has provoked revolt, and in the strength of that resistance, and the joy of their emancipation from its tyranny, liberty has been tempted to cast aside all limitations, and to assert that the privilege of the Christian is to gratify his own tastes, provided, of course, that he does not offend against the moral law. The difficulty is to create a new authority within, which shall take the place of that which sought to rule him from without. He refuses to accept the dictation of minister or church, and he is within his right in thus preserving his own independence. Instead of being governed by the traditions of the elders he finds, perhaps, a special pleasure in defying them. He is the servant of Christ, and to his own Master he stands or falls, and against that appeal to the one tribunal whose authority we all acknowledge there is not a word to be said. All that we can seek or desire to do is to enforce that supreme authority by suggesting some considerations which may present the whole subject in another aspect, and compel a man, before resolving on his course of conduct, solemnly to ponder the question what would be most acceptable to Christ.

The fear is lest indulgence should be taken either without any reference to conscience at all, or even with a resolution to override any secret misgivings or scruples which con-

science may have. There is a taste for certain amusements; they are enjoyed as a pleasant relief from the pressure of toil and anxiety; they are not regarded as having in them any taint of morality, and yet the man is not clear that it is lawful for a Christian to indulge in them. His duty under such conditions clearly is to test his hesitations and doubts, examine the foundation on which they rest, discriminate between mere prejudices or superstitions, and intelligent objections which ought to have their weight, and having done this, to carry out the persuasion of his own mind. Unfortunately, too many never enter into such a consideration. They find that their scruples are not shared by others, are probably ridiculed as signs of weakness, and they brush them aside and follow their own inclination. Whatever may be said of the particular amusement, it can hardly be questioned that such conduct is a distinct and serious injury to the spiritual life, by setting up individual taste or Church opinion as an arbiter independent of the control of conscience. Here, again, we have direct apostolic authority, "he that doubteth is condemned if he eat." A man who, with a clear understanding of what the theatre is, has arrived at the conviction that there is a certain use of it which is not only lawful but even expedient, is in an entirely different position from one who adopts a similar line of action, though in doing it is haunted by the fear that he may be doing wrong, but who stifles the doubt and listens only to the suggestions of his own inclination. It is in vain that he pleads the example of others, since his fundamental position is that he owes no subjection to others, and they, therefore, must be as powerless to extend as to curtail his liberty. He who has appealed to the Master cannot shield himself behind the example of other servants. Whether his theatre-going be in itself right or wrong, he has certainly made it wrong by the outrage he has done to his own conscience, and his tacit indifference to the authority of his Lord. What has first to be done in this matter—and when it has been thoroughly accomplished there will remain nothing more to be said—is to bring the whole area of life

under the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do—whether we go to theatres or abstain from them—let all be done to the glory of God. If that be done no man can have a right to judge his brother in such matters, albeit his rule of action may be in direct antagonism to his own. The utmost which any one who disapproves of his brother's conduct can do is to employ all the force of argument and persuasion to convince him that what he esteems lawful is, nevertheless, inexpedient.

The plea of expediency can, of course, never be urged in favour of what is in itself wrong. With a Christian, it is only after the lawfulness has been settled that the question of expediency can be at all entertained, and that with the idea of limiting, not extending liberty. It may be expedient for us to deny ourselves what we believe to be innocent and even healthful; it never can be expedient (and if it were it would not at all affect our line of duty) to do what in itself is wrong. Even the highest end can never sanctify unworthy and unlawful means. The considerations which enter into the decision as to what is expedient are not difficult to discover, especially if we listen to our spiritual instincts and study the teachings of Scripture. Perhaps more weight is due to the true instinct of a renewed soul than is commonly attributed to it. When it is not possible to assign any exact reason for the feeling, a man shrinks from certain pleasures to which he is nevertheless strongly drawn. Nothing is cheaper than the sneer with which some who profess to be of superior spirit would meet such a feeling, but it is not safe thus to trifle with it. It may be the note of warning which only a fool would disregard, the shrinking back of the soul from scenes in which its keen spiritual sensitiveness detects a danger which wisdom would teach it to avoid. For whether an act be lawful or unlawful, it cannot be expedient if the result be to lower, in however slight a degree, the tone of the spiritual life. Here, then, comes in the first of the laws of Christian expediency. The great aim of the Christian is to glorify his Lord by entire obedience to His will. He has to make his own calling and

election sure ; his calling to be a holy man—his election to be conformed to the image of Christ. It would be vain to one who has this object before him to tell him that some special mode of conduct is lawful, if he has the secret consciousness that in permitting himself the indulgence he is warring against his own soul. His desire is not simply that he should abstain from what is prohibited and do what is commanded, but that he should, by all means within his reach, promote the growth of godliness, and certainly eschew everything which tends in a contrary direction. It is not necessary that it should be condemned by conscience as sinful ; enough if there be a feeling within which warns him that it is dangerous. A wise man, who is careful as to his health, does not merely obey the injunctions of his physician, but consults his own experience, and avoids that which he has found harmful, even though it be among the things which are permitted him.

This argument, of course, does not touch those who are unconscious of any such peril, who do not find that their occasional visits to the theatre have a dissipating effect, induce frivolity of thought and temper, indispose for the more earnest work of life, or even foster that worldliness which is the bane of spiritual life. To them, they tell us, a theatre furnishes a pleasant recreation, a healthful, intellectual entertainment, and even stimulus, a diversion which throws a little colour round a life ordinarily sufficiently dull and monotonous. They admit the perils of excess, but they have not even a temptation in that direction. They recognize the necessity for discrimination in the theatres which they frequent and the plays which they see, but, having made these admissions, they protest against the suggestion that they should entirely abandon an amusement of whose innocence they are satisfied, and still more against the inference that, if they will not make the surrender, they must be regarded as lacking in spirituality, if not altogether recreant to the vows of their Christian profession.

It may be urged that they should have respect to the consciences of the weaker brethren, to whom such use of their Christian liberty would be a stumbling-block and



cause of offence. But such a plea, whatever weight may attach to it, will not be admitted by them as decisive, can scarcely be put forth as absolute even by those who employ it. For if it is to be accepted without qualification, it would place the conscience of the entire community under the tyranny of the weaker brethren. The excessive scruples of the sensitive conscience must not be allowed to rule the Church. For were this to be conceded it would be enough for a weaker brother to object to a change, and, however desirable it might be in itself, it must not be adopted lest he should be aggrieved. Ignorance, prejudice, the most stupid forms of Conservatism, would thus wield a commanding influence in the Church. It is only necessary to follow out the idea in its extreme development to be satisfied that it is a principle which can only be received with strict limitations.

Unquestionably, however, it is a law which no right-minded man would be content entirely to set aside. To shake the faith of "one of the least" of Christ's brethren—to tempt him to an indulgence which, however safe for us, may for him be charged with deadliest peril—to lower his conception of Christian obligation, and introduce an element of weakness into his religious life, is no slight offence. "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins." Reverse that, and the seriousness of this abuse of liberty by the sacrifice of the spiritual interests of others to the gratification of our own taste, may be better measured. Still, it must be acknowledged that, of the restraints which each man may choose to impose on his own liberty for the sake of others, his own conscience must be the judge, and its decisions must be mainly influenced by the circumstances of the individual case.

There are times when there is a peril of excessive laxity, and a need, therefore, of sacrifice in order to counteract an evil tendency. But there are also occasions when the inroads upon Christian liberty have to be met with a stern and determined resistance. The apostle who has most strongly insisted on this duty of consideration for the weak and



concession to their infirmities was himself the very first to withstand the tyranny of a narrow traditionalism which would have enforced its laws upon the Church. Whether at any particular time and in relation to any special subject, the danger lies on the side of licence or of bigotted repression, it is impossible for any one to decide except the individual himself. There are interests more momentous, of wider range, and of more permanent character than those of any individual, and a man who feels that these are at stake, and that his consideration for some weak brother may present the gospel of Christ in a false and misleading aspect to the world, may feel himself constrained to enter his practical protest on behalf not only of liberty but of the truth itself, whose interests are threatened by this narrowness.

It is only necessary to state these conditions of this practical problem in order to show its extreme delicacy, and the imperative duty of cultivating a tolerant spirit in relation to it. Christians who hold different views on this subject seem to find it very hard to understand each other upon the subject. The truth is, we live so much in our own religious homes, move so exclusively among our own cliques and coteries, are so accustomed to hear our own ideas echoed and repeated by our associates, and in our turn to repeat theirs, that we come unconsciously to regard them as infallible, and unfit ourselves to comprehend those of others. In some of our religious circles the theatre has always been treated as an innocent amusement, in others it has been viewed with undisguised abhorrence, and it is as difficult for the one to appreciate the scruples of the other as it is for him in his turn to believe in the spirituality of his critic. Yet it may be that both are conscientious, and in so far as it is so, neither has a right to constitute himself his brother's judge. To one who has been trained in old Puritan ideas, it is startling to be brought into contact with another of a different school, and to find him talking of a visit to the theatre as innocently and as frankly as of a visit to a tailor's shop. This is a point which needs to be recognized, and those to whom the theatre is most obnoxious

may be assured that they will be most likely to secure their own end when they do recognize it, and instead of pronouncing hasty and uncharitable judgments on all who do not conform to their requirements on this point, seek to convince them that having regard to the spiritual welfare of others they should be content to crucify their own tastes.

It is only one point of Christian expediency, however, at which we have yet looked, and we have found that on it there may be natural differences of opinion. It remains to be considered whether, looking at the theatre itself as it is with all its surroundings and accessories, it is an institution to which a man intent on serving God and his generation should give his personal sanction and support. This is a question which cannot be evaded, and which no sincere Christian, whose first anxiety is to do right "and please his neighbour, for that which is good unto edifying," would desire to evade. All theatres are not the same, and it may be very fairly pleaded that to frequent those of high moral status does not imply a patronage of others of a more questionable type. In granting this, it is necessary to remember at the same time how difficult it will be to make such distinction at all clear to the ordinary observer, and that, whatever be the intention, the influence of an individual who visits the theatres will tell to some extent on behalf even of those which he admits to be pernicious, not to say positively immoral in character. Justice requires, however, that we give the plea its proper value, and in order to do this we must deal not with an ideal theatre indeed, but with the best of actual theatres. How far it is possible to purify the surroundings I am incompetent to pronounce an opinion. Macready's biographer shows how the task baffled him. It may be that others have succeeded better, but Christian parents should surely be satisfied on this point before exposing their children to perils which one of the greatest of our tragedians deemed to be so grave that he would not allow any of his own children to be present even at his own performances until his farewell night, when he thought an exception might be made.

There is nothing which has served to create a stronger prejudice against what may be called the "Puritan" view of the theatre than the reckless attacks which have sometimes been made on the character of actors and actresses. It may be true that the influence of the "profession," as its members love to describe it, is not elevating; and indeed, in reading the biography of one so eminent in his day as Macready, it is hard to resist a conviction that it is of the very opposite tendency. In the great tragedian himself there were many high qualities. On those who have been trained to consider actors as a godless class, it must come as a startling surprise to find how continually he recognizes his dependence on God, and gratefully acknowledges His goodness. It is impossible to doubt his sincerity, or to suppose that his frequent confessions of sin, which are sometimes of the most penitential character, are a mere piece of hypocrisy. He must be a mystery to men to whom the very name of an actor is little short of an abomination, and yet as the veil which hides the daily life of the stage is withdrawn, one can hardly help feeling that his surroundings were extremely unfriendly to high moral and spiritual development. Madame Modjeska says: "As to the stage itself, there is less evil among actors than people suppose. It is dangerous for an excitable young girl, not surrounded by proper influences, to be trained for such a life. But a person of strong character would be as safe there as in many other positions." Such testimony from an accomplished and popular actress will satisfy a number of good people that they have not formed too unfavourable an estimate of the stage. There is, of course, a very wide interval between this and the conclusion that the majority of actors or actresses lead lives more or less disreputable. But a more qualified and hesitating apology, or, to put it plainly, one more calculated to excite distrust, could not well have been penned. As girls who desire to win distinction on the stage are, for the most part, excitable, and certainly can seldom be protected by the presence of their friends, the great majority of the aspirants to theatrical fame are at

once warned of the moral risk at which it will be sought. It is satisfactory to learn that persons of strong mind are not in the same danger, but unfortunately they are in a small minority, and the utmost that is said even for them is that the stage is not worse than many other positions. There is another point brought out in the statement of this experienced performer which tells in the same direction: "I do not like," she says, "the French emotional dramas. I think most of them have an unwholesome influence on the audience, and I believe they are bad for the players." Yet the actors have to play them, and meet the unwholesome influence as best they can.

Again we say that it would be extremely unfair to conclude, even from such statements as these, that actors as a whole are an immoral class, still more that every individual of the class is open to this charge. It is well known that so sweeping an indictment can be easily overthrown, since there are members of the profession on whom a breath of suspicion has never rested, who in their own spheres are deserving of all praise, and some of whom are honestly doing their best to purify the stage. But their endeavours in this direction are the best proof of all that it is necessary to establish. The curious fact in this controversy is that the most convincing adverse testimony is that which comes from actors themselves. Macready was so deeply impressed with the evils of the theatre in his time, and so determined to work a reform, that he involved himself in serious trouble in his attempt to work out his praiseworthy designs. Strange to say, one of his fiercest assailants was the great organ of Tory High Churchism, which was so intent on conserving every vested interest that it could not endure to see prostitutes deprived of their right of free entry into the theatre. The remarkable paper in which Mrs. Kendall exposed some of the evils which have continued to our own time, is another illustration of our point. And now comes Madame Modjeska, who says:

I cannot say that I notice any marked moral progress in the drama. In the absence of any stock companies it is hardly to be

expected that there will be any marked moral progress. The great majority of managers feel obliged to produce those plays that bring the most money, and such plays are by no means the best, either from a moral or an artistic point of view.

This is in accord with the oft-quoted saying of a great manager that to put Shakespeare on the stage would spell bankruptcy. If it be said that the public taste has been purified since his time, we have Madame Modjeska's evidence as to the stage of to-day, and what it amounts to is that high-class dramas will not pay, and that managers are therefore compelled to produce those which are inferior, both in an artistic and a moral point of view.

It has been pleasantly suggested that this view might be modified, or at all events that that criticism would have more weight, if the critic had been an occasional visitor to the theatre himself. It is hard to see why this should be so. If strong objection had been taken to the spectacle, if it had been spoken of as a flaunting of vice in the face of the audience, or had it been hinted that no one could go to a theatre without seeing or hearing something to shock the moral sense, the argument would have had some weight. But there has been a careful abstinence from every imputation of the kind. We will go even further, and say that there is no doubt that there are theatres in which an evening might be spent without receiving the slightest injury. When Madame Modjeska says, "The claim against the drama that plays are bad because they show up certain vices, that is, of course, ridiculous," we quite agree. The objections urged are entirely independent of the character of the dramas or the actors, and could not be at all affected by the fact that there may be stage plays which may not only be free from coarseness or vice, but even calculated to subserve some moral purpose. The contention that it is not expedient for Christians to patronise the theatre, because of these redeeming features, is based on objections to the system, which could not be affected by a personal knowledge of it, seeing that the occasional and superficial view which is gained by a stranger can avail nothing against the testimony of those who are familiar with all its

inner life. The only effect of the visit would be that possibly it might exercise such a fascination on the taste as to disturb the judgment.

The real problem which every Christian has to determine is this. Grant that the recreation is legitimate, and that it would have no harmful influence, is not the cost which has to be paid for it too heavy? It is almost superfluous to say that even if this be answered in the negative, the justification would cover only a very limited proportion of theatrical performances, and of course this would be one factor in the determination of the question of its expediency, because of the danger that the few innocent may become a cloak for the many that are injurious. Bearing in mind the distinction, and assuming (a very large assumption indeed) that it can be maintained, the question still presses, Is it expedient to support a system which is admitted to be so full of serious moral risks, if not to the audience certainly to the actors? A theatre, it must not be forgotten, requires a very large staff, and of that staff but a few are brought under those intellectual influences of their art which are supposed to be ennobling and refining. From the prominent actors no doubt a large amount of intellectual effort is demanded. They must work hard if they would excel. But they are a very small fraction of the whole. A theatre requires the services of a large number who can easily prepare for the humble part they have to take, who have most of their time at their own disposal, and who, as might be expected, spend it in ways which, even at the best, are demoralizing. They are mere loafers and loungers, whose Bohemian habits do much to win for the profession that reputation of which its best members reasonably complain. Madame Modjeska's testimony is enough to show that the life even of the most accomplished actors is not free from danger. What, then, is to be said of those in the humbler, and as we have seen, more perilous positions? Ought Christians to indulge in a recreation which cannot be obtained without a number of those for whom Christ died, even as for them, being exposed to this grave moral peril? If it be said in reply that

the theatre can be freed from this as well as other evil accessories, the answer is that when the purification has been effected it will be time enough to reconsider our verdict.

But that verdict is simply one for personal guidance. No one has a right to dictate to others on these nice points of Christian ethics. All he can do is to employ argument, and this can never have its proper effect unless it proceed on the assumption that theatre-going cannot be treated as a moral offence on which Church discipline should be exercised. The endeavour to maintain this view has, we are convinced, materially helped the tendency towards absolute freedom. Men have chafed under restraints for which they could see no warrant, and rebelled against judgments they felt to be unfair, and they have given practical effect to their objection by taking the indulgence, without pausing to consider whether it would contribute to their own spiritual profit or be in harmony with their obligations to their fellow-men. The only effectual counteractive is an earnest appeal to conscience. Much has been gained when we have succeeded in rousing thought on the subject.

In conclusion, it must be said, that if charity is to be exercised on the one hand, it must be equally manifested on the other. Those who claim to exercise their liberty by enjoying an amusement which a number of their Christian friends think inexpedient, if only because of the general influence of the theatre upon society, are bound on their side to abstain from sneers at these conscientious convictions of their friends as indicative of narrow Philistinism or invincible prejudice. As to the reproach of Puritanism which is so frequently hurled against men whose scruples are unpopular, they may well be content to bear it. For ourselves we are satisfied if we are able at all to breathe the spirit and imitate the example of some of the noblest men who "ever lived in the tide of time." That the defenders of the system against which Puritanism was a protest, should scoff at the men who saved England from the tyranny which they would have imposed upon her.



But that Nonconformists, or even Evangelical Protestants, should join in the cry, is certainly surprising. The Roman satirist taunts the degenerate descendants of the old Roman heroes who kept the images of their ancestors in their halls, though they did not imitate their virtue; but what might he not have said if they had cast down the images themselves, and sought to obliterate the memory of the illustrious pedigree? One thing at least must be said. It was in virtue of the very robustness of principle and character, at which the finger of scorn is now pointed, that the Puritans did such noble service for God. A pleasure-loving generation is not likely to emulate their deeds.

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#### THE PLACE OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST IN PASCAL'S APOLOGETIC.

It is no easy matter to assign to Pascal his proper place in the rank of Christian apologists. Looked at on one side, he appears to be the Father of Apology in the modern sense of the term; while from another point of view he appears linked to his own age, and to methods which, to use the mildest language, have now become antiquated. His aim was to prove the truth of the Christian religion, and in judging of his success, two sets of influences must be taken into account. In the first place, the century in which he lived was the seventeenth, when Biblical criticism and exegesis were in their infancy. Among ecclesiastics the theory of verbal inspiration was everywhere held, and as there was little knowledge of Hebrew, the Vulgate and Septuagint had all the authority of original texts. In the second place, the men with whom he had to deal were not, as now, deists, infidels, sceptics, or agnostics, but atheists in the proper sense of the term. Their atheism, however, was more practical than speculative, a denial of God which consisted as much in godless living as in argument.



But though affected in his methods by both of these causes, in the scheme which he proposes to himself Pascal is supremely original. He begins with man, and works up from him to God, reversing the ordinary process.

There are two main divisions in the apology, the first of which treats of the misery of man without God; the second, of the happiness of man with God, as restored through Jesus Christ and revealed in the Scriptures. Of the former of these, the main principle may be briefly stated as follows: Man has an idea of a happiness which he has lost. Hence his multitudinous occupations in search of it. It is only to be found, however, in God, which indicates that man is made for God. And herein consists the true greatness of man, that he knows himself to be miserable, that he does not acquiesce in his limitations, deceptions, weaknesses, but, whether consciously or unconsciously, shows himself capable of being raised above them. After thus examining man and discovering his needs, Pascal proceeds to test the various religions and systems of philosophy which have professed to be able to satisfy humanity. This forms the transition to the second part of his work. In his examination he arrives at the Christian religion by a kind of method of residues, and applies to it the usual tests. He deals with it, always, of course, in a more or less fragmentary manner, under the following various heads. Of the Jewish People; of the Authenticity of the Holy Scriptures; Prophecy; Types and the Typical; Characteristics of the True Religion; Excellence of the Christian Religion, its lasting character, its proofs; Proofs of the Divinity of Christ, Mission and Greatness of Christ; Mystery of Jesus Christ, and Abridgment of His Life.

Our object at present is to discuss Pascal's treatment of the last of these subjects—the person and character of Christ, and the relations in which he conceived it to stand to the rest of his work as thus described. It will be well to arrange the subject under three main heads, more, however, for the sake of convenience than because any such division is suggested by Pascal himself.

1. Christ in His relations to the universe, or to man collective.
2. Christ in His relations to individuals.
3. Christ as He is in His own nature, or, the Jesus of history.

First, then, Christ is the end and aim of all Pascal's endeavour, the *ἰδέα τοῦ ἀγάθου*, as it were, towards which he ever strives. Pascal's conception of the place of Christ in history is the broadest and finest possible. He is the crowning point in the history of humanity, to Him it all flows, from Him it all descends. The great characteristic of Christ is His universality; here He stands in contrast to Moses and Abraham, who were for a people, while He is for all men. He came in the fulness of time, last in the succession of God's messengers, greater than all before Him, uniting in Himself all that were to be. "What being," exclaims Pascal, "was ever so distinguished? The whole Jewish nation predicted His advent, the whole Gentile world afterwards adored Him. Both Jew and Gentile regard Him as their centre." It is remarkable to note how Pascal treats of Christ as the centre and author of the Christian religion, quite apart from Christianity itself considered as a body of doctrine and morals. This must certainly be regarded as a step in advance, an idea, capable no doubt of elaboration, but, even as stated in its barest form, novel to the time in which Pascal lived. To the Christian, Christ is to be all in all, object of prophecy and miracle. Pascal had thus attained to the grand truth that history, Gentile as well as Jewish, before Christ, was looking towards Him, and in Him finds explanation. Thus far we willingly follow him, but with his extension and proof of the position it is not so easy to agree. No doubt Christ was the object of prophecy. But, believing this, it is not necessary to find in every obscure statement of the Old Testament Scriptures a veiled prediction of Him. Again, it is a marvellous truth which Pascal states in the following words—"Scripture says that God is a God hidden, and that owing to the corruption of man's nature He has been left in a blindness whence he cannot be

delivered save through Jesus Christ." But how much force does this lose if the idea which it expresses is only used to find reference to Christ in obscure phrases of the Old Testament, or, in other words, to allegorize the Bible. It is needless to enter into Pascal's treatment of Old Testament prophecy. He has a wonderful knowledge of the subject, and for those who believe in a theory of verbal inspiration his proof, a rather long array of proofs that Jesus is the Christ who was to come, is simply overwhelming. It is not here, however, that his strength lies. In his scattered remarks on Types and the Typical, he builds on a much surer foundation. There, with an insight far beyond his time, he shows God's preparation for Christ in the history of the Jewish people. The form in which he treats the subject is perhaps pedantic, but those who can read between the lines may find in it a view of revelation that is both new and broad. A few quotations will make this clear. "God designing to form for Himself a holy people, separating them from every other nation, delivering them from their enemies, and bringing them into a place of rest, gave promise of these events beforehand. Throughout all time to sustain the hope of the elect, He kept before their eyes images of these things, and never left them without the assurance of His power and willingness to effect their salvation. At the creation of the world Adam was a witness hereof, and was moreover depository of the promise of the Saviour, who was to be born of a woman." "God wishing to show that He could form a holy people typified them by visible objects. As nature is a type of grace, He has done that in the beneficences of nature which He designed to do in those of grace, that it might be seen by what He achieved in the visible, how much He was capable of achieving in the invisible. Thus God's purpose in saving His people from the deluge, and raising up a nation from Abraham, was something more than to bring them into a land of ease and fertility." Again, "The law was typical. The Old Testament is but a series of cyphers." The key to the cypher is Christ. But we must beware of two errors, the one is to take everything too

literally, the other too spiritually. See now how he conceives the offices of Jesus Christ in the world. "It was His design to produce a great people, elect, holy, chosen, to guide, support, and bring them into a place of rest and sanctity. To consecrate them to the service of God, and make them His temple. To reconcile them to God, and save them from His wrath." So the prophecies were "That He should come as a deliverer, who should bruise the serpent's head, should deliver His people from their sins, bring in a new and everlasting testament, that He should institute another priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, which should be eternal in its existence. That this, His Anointed, should be glorious, powerful, mighty, yet appear in so abject a condition that none should recognize Him or be conscious of His ineffable dignity. That He should be rejected and finally slain." Passages such as these present a striking contrast to others which deal with the same subject in a purely allegorizing spirit. Pascal draws a bold, clear outline, but in filling up the details he is largely guided by the fashion of his time, and presents a living example of the truth of his own dictum concerning man, that he is a mass of contradictions.

But to proceed, as Christ is thus the central point of history, so in the spiritual world does He stand midway between man and God. His mission is to reveal God. Pascal's notion of the revelation of God in Christ is remarkable. It is a revelation which comes through man, or, more properly speaking, through humanity. As has already been hinted, Pascal's appeal is not from God to man, but from man to man. He conceives Christianity as man with God, and his whole apology is directed to proving the internal truth of Christianity, as such. He finds then his great argument in Christ, who was both God and man. He has penetrated into the mysteries of the Divine nature, but He also knows those of our humanity, and thus He is the one link which can bind God to man. You may have a system which is concerned only with man, or you may have one which has to do only with God; but Christianity differs from both such, in that it can interpret both God and man—God to

man, and man to God. But before you can explain God to man, you must explain man to himself. This is what Christ came to do. Says Pascal:

We not only cannot attain to the knowledge of God save through Jesus Christ, but we cannot know ourselves. We know nothing of life, nothing of death, but by Him. Christ has done no more than teach men that they naturally love themselves; that they are enslaved, blind, diseased, unhappy, and guilty; that they require to be delivered, enlightened, healed, and made happy; and this is only to be done by leading them to abhor themselves, and following up this lesson by the sufferings and death of the cross. . . . Without Jesus Christ man must be a creature of vice and misery; with Him he is delivered from both. In Him is all our virtue and all our happiness, apart from Him is nothing but vice, misery, error, darkness, death, despair.

Thus Christ, in teaching man his true state, leads him to look towards one that is higher than himself, and secures that he shall not look in vain. Christ's revelation of man to man makes possible His revelation of God. "We only know God by Jesus Christ. Without this Mediator all communication with God is barred; through it we obtain a knowledge of Him. All who have pretended to know and prove the existence of God without Christ have failed in the attempt."

On this position Pascal continues to build up his testimony to Christ from miracles. All that concerns us here is the relation of the miracles to the Person of Christ, and here Pascal does not take up the strongest ground. He makes miracles attest Christianity, and does not see in them a necessary outcome of Christianity and of its supreme miracle—the Person of Christ. And so Christ Himself proves His divinity by means of miracles. Pascal says: "The method which Jesus Christ ever adopted for proving His Messiahship, was, not to rest His doctrine upon Scripture and the prophets, but upon miracles. He justifies His remitting sin by a miracle." (It is only fair to say that in another connection Pascal reverses this, and declares that the great proof of Christianity is prophecy.) But that Pascal was not blind to the far higher view which sees in miracles not so much a proof, but rather a natural

concomitant or consequence of Christ's supreme personality, may perhaps be gathered from some scattered fragments of his writings, as, "We have to judge not truth by miracles, but miracles by truth;" and, "We must judge miracles by doctrine, then doctrine by miracles."

Before leaving this part of the subject there are certain omissions in Pascal's treatment which demand a brief notice. His apology is not complete, it professes to be no more than an unordered complex of fragments, which, so far from having had the author's final revision, were not even put together in their present shape by him. Still it is strange that throughout there is little or no reference to the relations within the Godhead. Christ is considered as related to men and the world, but the relation never appears in Pascal in the form known from the New Testament as the doctrine of the Logos—of the Word that was with the Father from the beginning. It would not perhaps be true to say that there is anything in the *Pensées* against such a doctrine; the fact, however, that it is not discussed is sufficiently remarkable.

2. To pass now to our second division: Christ in His relations to individual men, rather than to mankind. Here we shall have to enter again on some of the ground already approached. We do so, however, from a different point of view. Our discussion will become more personal and practical, less speculative. In dealing with this subject Pascal makes the reader his confidant. He takes himself as a type of the race, puts his own experience in the foreground; we learn what Christ may be to men from what He has become to one man—Pascal. The ground on which we tread is here holy. Pascal speaks from a profound religious experience, and it is certain that had he been able to revise these *Pensées* with his own hand, much of what is now before us would never have seen the light; more might have been known of Pascal's thoughts and speculations, but less of Pascal himself. He says in one place: "In the promises, every one finds that which in his heart he most affects, whether temporal good or spiritual blessings—God or the creature." So Pascal, looking at Christ with the

eye of the spirit, first found in Him his true self. In Christ man is to read his own nature, what Christ appears to him, that he may become to Christ. This is his true religion. This is the meaning of that idea which Pascal continually insists upon, that Christ came to show to man his misery by revealing to him his true greatness, which consists in the fact that he can know himself to be miserable, and have aspirations beyond those of his present evil state.

The position from which he starts cannot be better given than in his own words—

Had man never been corrupt, he would innocently and securely enjoy truth and happiness. Had man never been otherwise than corrupt, he would have no idea of virtue and blessedness. But, wretched as we are, and even more than if there were no greatness in our condition, we have an idea of happiness and cannot attain it. . . . Know then, proud man, how great a paradox thou art. Bow down thyself, weak reason; be silent, thou foolish nature; learn that man is altogether incomprehensible by man, and learn from your Maker your true condition which you ignore.

Christ has to reveal to all men the truth which Pascal learned from Him. What this was may be seen in the contrast between the Pascal of Paris, centre of a brilliant literary circle, wit, conversationalist, polemic, and the Pascal of Port Royal, outdoing all the holy brethren in devotion, loosed from earthly ties, servant of one Master—Christ. The contrast he refers to thus:

Each day of my life I bless my Redeemer, who has transformed me a man full of weakness, misery, and lust, of pride and ambition, into a man exempt from all these evils, by the power of His grace, to which all the glory is due; since of myself I have only misery and sin.

But the religion of Pascal is not a gloomy thing. Christ leads those who trust in Him, not away from the joys of this life into the dim satisfaction of the life of a *dévo*t. Both the security and happiness in which men live in this world are false, and this is the reason of the disquietude which is everywhere around us. Christ shows men this,

and leads His followers to a happiness and a peace which are lasting. This constitutes the fitness of Christianity to man, and is the surest proof of its Divine origin. Pascal uses the phrase "the cross of Christ," quite in what may be called the evangelical sense. "It is this," he says, "which leads men to believe." "*Ne evacuata sit crux.*" Again, Christ appeals to the heart of man rather than to his intellect; so, to become Christ's our affections must be centred in Him, we must reproduce in ourselves His sacrifice. "Jesus Christ is the Divine Being to whom we can draw near without pride, and before whom we can be abased without despair." In one passage of marvellous power and pathos, Pascal represents Christ as speaking to His disciple, and shows clearly what he conceived his redeeming relation to Himself to be.

Conversion is Mine. Fear not, and pray, confiding in Me. . . . I am present, by My word in Scripture, by My Spirit in the Church, by My influence and power in the priesthood, by prayer in the faithful. . . . Thou must bear bodily servitude and bondage. I deliver now only from that which is spiritual. I am more a friend to thee than thine earthly associates; I have done for thee more than they: they would not suffer for thee as I have done; nor would they have died for thee in the midst of thy infidelity and crimes as I did, as I am ready to do, and have done, for all My elect. I love thee better than thou ever lovedst thy sins.

Then the disciple makes answer :

I see the abyss of pride, curiosity, and sensuality into which I have fallen. There is properly no tie existing between myself and God and Christ. But He has been made sin for me; all my stains have fallen upon Him. He is become viler than I; and, instead of abhorring me, He deems Himself honoured by my coming to Him for succour. Holy Himself, He is the better able to sanctify.

But this relation is not only mystical, spiritual, as these words seem to imply. The influence of Christ for His disciples extends over the whole range of the practical life; in Him all our surroundings receive a new meaning—He becomes to us the key to the mystery of existence. So Pascal :

I regard Jesus as sustaining all the relations of life in ourselves. I



see Him a Father in His Father. A Brother in His brethren ; poor in the poor ; rich in the rich ; a Teacher and Priest in the priests ; a Sovereign in the sovereigns. For in His glorified condition as God He is everything that is great, and in His mortal state everything that is abject and base ; He assumed, indeed, this mortal state that He might dwell in all, and be the model of every condition.

3. We pass now to the third point—Pascal's conception of the historical Person of Christ. Here he appears to anticipate a form of apologetic which has become of great importance in modern times. He realizes that everything depends on the conception which the Christian forms of Christ, his model and Master. He has given us in his writings, though not perhaps in direct connection with his apologetic, an abridgment of the life of Christ. It will be better perhaps not to refer to this here, but rather to confine ourselves to those aspects of Christ's personality on which Pascal lays most stress in his *Apology*, and in the treatment of which his originality is most apparent. They may be divided under two heads—(1) Christ's true greatness, and (2) Christ's humiliation.

Under the first head come some of the most remarkable reflections in all Pascal's writings. In his treatment of Christ's character there is little of the Roman Catholic, less of the ascetic ; he indeed looks up to his Lord with all the veneration of the former, all the passionate devotion of the latter, but there is more in his worship than either or both of these things. Pascal says continually that for religion the proper court of appeal is the heart, but when it comes to the point he does not suffer reason to be excluded. His Christ does not only entrance the feelings and affections of men, but by the perfections of His character He is able to convince their reason that He must be the "Chief among ten thousand, the altogether lovely." We have to ask, then, in what did the perfection of Christ consist, and who are they who are able to recognize it ? For there is a greatness, be it remembered, of an order so high as to be incomprehensible to all intellects, save those that are strong enough to bear its light. The man of material mind cannot perceive and cares nothing for the

greatness which is only spiritual, just as for the spiritually minded man mere material splendour has no charm. So those who would understand the true exaltation of the Redeemer must have their vision prepared, their character moulded into, at least, a part conformity with His, or they will look at Him in vain. So Pascal says: "The infinite distance between body and mind is a figure of the infinitely more infinite distance between mind and love; for this is supernatural. All the splendour of wordly greatness has no lustre for people who are engaged in investigations of mind. The greatness of wisdom, which is nowhere but in God, is invisible to the carnal and intellectual. The three orders are different in kind. Great geniuses have their empire, their eclat, their greatness, their victory, their brilliancy; they have no need of carnal greatness with which they have no concern. They are not seen by eyes but by minds. That is enough. The saints have their empire, their eclat, their victory, their lustre, and they have no need of carnal or mental greatness with which they have no concern, for they neither add to them nor take from them. They are seen of God and of angels, not of bodies nor of curious minds. God is enough for them. Archimedes without any eclat would be in the same veneration. He did not fight battles for men to gaze at, but he has given his inventions to all minds. Oh how he has shone upon men's minds. So Jesus Christ without property, without any attainment of science, is great in His order of holiness. He did not give us any invention; but He was humble, patient, holy, holy towards God; terrible to the devils; without any sin. Oh how He came in prodigious magnificence to the eyes of the heart and of those who can see wisdom." This is the substance and foundation of Pascal's great picture of Christ. In his treatment of Christ's life, the idea of the Saviour as founder of a new order of holiness is kept continually before the mind. He is thus made glorious not by the aid of any adventitious halo, but by being seen in the brightness which is naturally His. To Pascal, all the glory of His Divine mission, all the lustre which He derives from His relation

with the Father, seems to grow pale before the majesty of His simple human life, with its awful purity, its brave humility, and its strong endurance.

But there is a dark background to the picture to which Pascal again and again refers. In striking contrast to some of the passages just quoted stands his treatment of the humiliation of Christ. Here he is the mystic, the ascetic, true member of the order to which he belonged. He interpreted Christ's suffering and sacrifice through that which he himself underwent. And who shall say that the interpretation is untrue. For mark, he does not dwell, after the wont of many of his co-religionists, on the physical sufferings of our Lord. He, as it were, enters into the mind of the Saviour, sees Him in His human loneliness, watches with Him in His dark hours of prayer and weakness, realizing all the time with a strong intensity of conviction that this all was endured for his sake, and that in his own suffering now the Saviour shares and watches. "Jesus," he says, "in His passion endured torments at the hand of man, but in His agony His sufferings arose from the depths of His own spirit. The infliction was not from a mortal but from an omnipotent hand, and it required omnipotence to sustain it. Jesus was left alone on the bare ground, which knows and feels and shares His grief; heaven and earth only are acquainted with it. Jesus never, I believe, uttered a complaint except upon this occasion; but then He bewailed Himself as unable to contain His bitter grief. 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.' Christ then sought companionship and consolation on the part of man. This also seems to me to be the only occasion when He did so. Yet He received none, for His disciples slept. Jesus will continue to watch and agonize to the end of the world. While uncertain what might be the Father's will, He prays and shrinks from death. But when He knows His will, He offers Himself to death. *Eamus Processit*. Jesus in sorrow of spirit, seeing all His followers slumbering, and His enemies wakeful, betakes Himself unreservedly to the Father." And mark one last quotation, throwing as it does much light on a passage in Pascal's life which has

been little understood and for which he has been greatly blamed, viz., his conduct to his friends when at Port Royal. "Jesus on entering upon His agony separates Himself from His disciples : in imitation of Him, we should separate ourselves from those most near and dear to us."

It is with mixed feelings that we glance back for a moment over the results of our inquiry. The whole work of Pascal, as it lies before us, is little more than a splendid ruin. Or, to find a closer parallel, it is like the outline of some stately edifice which the builder has not lived to finish. Parts stand reared here and there, showing what would have been the fair proportions of the whole, but the rest is no more than a wealth of materials gathered but not ordered. Thus we shall look in vain for a complete treatment of any special portion, still less shall we be able to fit such portion duly into the rest of the building. We ask for Pascal's doctrine of the Person of Christ, and we find that we have to make it for ourselves. There is no approach to an elaborate systematic treatment. Did Pascal believe in Christ's Divinity? Most assuredly. But the proofs we require are not always what we should expect and where we should expect them. We find them drawn at times not from the nature of the Divine Being, but from a more than doubtful interpretation of a more than doubtful history. But at other times it is easy to see that Pascal had sure ground on which to rest, and the truth is flashed in upon us with the certainty of conviction. "In and through Jesus Christ we prove God's existence, and obtain a system of sound doctrine and wholesome morality. Christ, then, is in truth God manifested to man."

It is the same with the humanity of Christ. It is in vain we look for articulate treatment, for the working out of logical nexus between it and His Divinity. None the less we are convinced by what Pascal does say. He had a profound pity for merely metaphysical theology; he cares not to persuade the reason of man if he cannot convince his heart. "The Jews," he says, "in testing the Divinity of Christ proved Him to be man." Is not this Pascal's method, and here his great originality? His Christ is not the Christ

of cloister and monastery, fit subject for the sensuous devotions of monks and nuns. He is the Christ of man, tempted, tried as we are, yet without sin. Able to give not merely sentimental consolations through a holy Mother Church, but a real salvation from a sin which is as real. Through Pascal's sacrifice we must read Pascal's Saviour. Thus what a marvellous picture the man presents. Wondrous combination of strength and weakness. An intellect so powerful as to raise him at times above the prejudices and conventionalities of an age most prejudiced, most conventional. He becomes Pioneer in a cause that is well-nigh desperate. But he can only go so far. Sometimes the axe slips from his fingers, sometimes he falls back into paths which he seemed to have left far behind. And after all, what is the result?—a work half finished, which, as one often hears, is more praised than read. Pascal had a mind that was too great for his body, the mighty soul wore out its mortal tenement too soon. He is a mournful example of his own pathetic description of man as a reed—but a reed that thinks.

W. B. SELBIE.

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#### PIONEERING IN NEW GUINEA.\*

JAMES CHALMERS is one who may properly be reckoned in the first rank of the missionaries of the cross, worthy to stand by the side of Eliot, or Moffat, or Williams; the apostle of New Guinea, as they were of the Red Indians, or the Hot-tentots, or the South Sea Islanders. In true heroism, forgetfulness of self, noble daring, dauntless courage, blended with singular gentleness, and enthusiasm for his work, inspired by love to Christ and to souls, he is not a whit behind the very chief of these apostles. His book is outside the sphere of criticism. It is a revelation of the man himself in all his nobility of character, and tells the

\* *Pioneering in New Guinea.* With Illustrations. By JAMES CHALMERS. (Religious Tract Society.)

story of his work with a vividness which is the more impressive because of its simplicity. The best way of introducing it to our readers is to give some passages by which they may judge of it for themselves.

#### THE HORRORS OF SAVAGE LIFE IN NEW GUINEA.

Paitana is a village up one of the creeks from Hall Sound, near Yule Island, surrounded by mangrove swamps; but in the village, coconut, betelnut, and breadfruit grow luxuriantly. The natives have always been looked upon as treacherous, but having visited them some time ago, it was hoped they would become more friendly. On my return to Yule, I found that on my previous visit some had arranged to have my head, and I can remember many things that looked very suspicious. Some years ago two foreigners were killed in Hall Sound by the Paitana natives. They have also killed people from Delena, Maiva, and other villages; but the climax was reached when they killed a man from Lese, who was visiting them as a friend. When the news of the murder reached Lese they determined to have revenge, but resolved to wait until the planting season was over. For long the Paitana natives lived away in towards the hills; but, thinking Lese had in the meantime given up all idea of "payment," they returned to the village. During all that time the Lese natives were preparing revarevas (war canoes), and keeping very quiet as to the time of their attack; but it came at last, and a terrible payment it was. Paitana, in her fancied security so far up a creek, in through very long grass, and surrounded by thick mangrove bush, little dreamt of what the morning would yield. All the revarevas were got ready, and men and women shipped. When visiting Motomolu some time ago, we slept in our boat one night between Lese and the former. I was very tired, and had been over a week in the boats. About 2 a.m. I was awakened by shouting, and on looking over the gunwale saw to my astonishment a fully-equipped revareva. Forty men are carried in each canoe, with paddles, and a number of men stand on the centre platform with bows and arrows. After hearing who we were, we soon became friends, and exchanged presents. The revareva is composed of two very long canoes lashed together by long poles with a platform between. Twenty-four of these were got ready by Lese and started. Pulling all night, they arrived on the south-west side of Yule before daybreak, and there they remained until the following night. After sunset, and when quite dark, they pulled for the creek, where they met a canoe with a man and two women belonging to Lolo in it. They made the man prisoner, saying they did not mean to kill him, but that, to save his own life and that of the women, he must become their guide to Paitana. To that he consented, and they allowed the women to depart. He led them up the creek, through the swamps, long

grass, bush, &c., close to the village, when they allowed him to return. They then surrounded the village, sending a strong party into the main street. All sat down quietly and waited for a little more light. The morning star was up, and soon there would be light for their dreadful work. A native awakes, lights his *baubau* (pipe), has a smoke, a yawn, and a stretch, looks out and sees people in the village. He calls out—"Who are you?" "We are Leseans, come to pay for our friend you murdered. Long have we waited to see you paid for your murdering propensities, but all seem afraid. You have tried on us, and now we shall see." In other houses the aroused natives are in a state of confusion, the arrows begin to fly in showers, and men, women, and children are wounded in their houses. Many fleeing are caught and clubbed, or their brains are beaten out with clubs. Many remain in their houses, hoping that they may be omitted from the general carnage. The houses are entered and everything valuable is carried away, and then the whole is set in a blaze, when the dead, those dying from wounds, and the living, are all burnt in the one great fire. Men, women, and children all suffered; mercy was shown to none. I asked a native who got through the environment how many were killed. He said it was impossible to tell the number of the dead, but only ten who slept in the village that night escaped. Flushed with victory and weighted with loot, the Leseans returned to their *revarevas*, pulled down the creek and along the coast, with horns blowing and men and women dancing and singing on the platforms of the *revarevas* (pp. 331-3).

## CANNIBALISM.

The temple where I am sitting is the largest, and it is the finest thing of the kind I have yet seen. There are two large posts in front eighty feet high, on which rests the large peaked shade, around which there hangs a graceful fringe of young sago leaf. The front is about thirty feet wide, and the whole length of the house is about 160 feet, tapering gradually down to the back, where it is small. Our compartment is about twenty feet high and ten broad. The front is a common platform floored with the outer skin of the sago palm, and kept beautifully clean. The whole is divided into courts, with divisions of cocoanut leaves, nine feet high, on which hang various figures, not at all good-looking. From the top to the cocoanut leaves hang graceful curtains of the young frond of the sago palm. Standing on the platform in front, and looking down the whole length along the passage or hall, with the various divisions and their curtains, it has a wonderful effect. In each of the courts are numerous skulls of men, women, and children, crocodiles and wild boars, also many breasts of the cassowary. All are carved and many painted. The human skulls are of those who have been killed and eaten. The daintiest dish here is man, and it is considered that only fools refuse and despise it. In the

last court there are the same kinds of ornaments, and then a screen with-curiously formed things of wood and native cloth hanging on it. Also *sibis* (their only clothing), belts, small bags, and other things belonging to those murdered, which have been presented to the gods. Inside of that court is the most sacred place of all. Few ever enter there. On my arrival I had to stand up in the canoe, that I might be seen by all the people. On ascending the wooden steps from the canoe to the platform, I was conducted by the chief to the temple, where, sitting down each side of the passage, were many men ready to receive me. They never spoke a word while I went down the centre and back to the platform, followed by the chief; then they all rose, and after giving a great shout gathered round me. The passage I walked along had the appearance of glazed cloth, with various figures carved on it; it was carpeted with the outer skin of the sago palm, glazed by the blood of the victims so frequently dragged over it, and by constant walking on it. After being examined and pronounced a human being, I returned with the chief through the various courts to the sacred place. I was allowed to enter, but the chief was too frightened, and he remained outside, and would only speak in a whisper to those near. I entered into that eerie place, where small bats in abundance flew about, and saw six curious-looking figures made of cane. The mouth was like a frog's, enormously large and wide open; the body, seven feet high in the centre, and about nine feet long, had the appearance of a large dugong. Out of these mouths flew, in constant succession, the small bats. The whole temple looks splendid, and, although my new friends are cannibals, yet it goes to show that they are something beyond the mere wild savage. Might I call them cannibal semi-civilized savages? In the various courts are fireplaces, alongside of which the men sleep. The chief, *Ipairaitani*, has given me his quarters, but I do not think I shall sleep in them. I have just had dinner and breakfast all in one. I could have enjoyed it better if there had not been so many skulls in a heap close by, some of which were tolerably new. These skulls are at present down for cleaning and repairs, but when all is in order they are hung on pegs all round; no scientific collection could be better kept. I fancy each man who has killed or helped to kill a foe has his own peculiar painting and carving on the skull (pp. 59-61).

#### HOW THE MISSION WORK IS DONE.

The way in which the mission work is done will be illustrated by a visit which Mr. Chalmers made to Kivori:—

We showed every respect to our numerous hosts, tasted several dishes, held on to one because of its thoroughly excellent quality, and disposed of the others amongst our followers. We met all the chiefs, spoke to them of the teachers and their mission, and then received their sincere promise to treat the teachers kindly. On



Sunday we had services, and as usual the singing was greatly enjoyed. At services in the house we dispensed with singing, because of the crush it caused, and the difficulty experienced in getting rid of the excited crowd when it was over. On Sunday afternoon we returned to Maiva, when we met five people anxious for baptism—one, a good old friend, who begged earnestly to be received into the Church of Christ. On the Monday there was one of those soul-stirring gatherings that are met with in these heathen lands, composed of a crowd of natives who have come to see the first native converts baptized into the Church of Christ, the converts themselves, and the mission party. Only after a long period of preparation as catechumens and receiving instruction, and after a thorough public profession of faith in Christ, do we baptize them. In this instance the five were men who have been for a long time connected with the mission, take part in the services, and held short services in other villages. The wholesale baptizing of natives simply because they would like to be, or were told to be, or because they were willing to do *lotu* by taking a piece of cloth or shirt, is surely not Christianity, and can only be done for effect. If the mere adhesion to the mission and the willingness to have clothing is sufficient, then thousands connected with us should long ago have been baptized. But of what use would it be, as they are still heathen, though friendly? The enlightening goes on, and one after another is led from the dense darkness through the glimmering light on to the full light of glorious freedom in Christ and His Cross—set free from their superstition by His truth. But not in the present or following generation will the superstitions of these people be entirely overcome. There are nearly 2,000 people being taught in New Guinea connected with our branch of the mission, and it may safely be hoped the young will know little of the past, and they will be free from much their parents believed (pp. 242-4).

#### A NEW GUINEA CONVERT.

In all the tribes of New Guinea there are numerous chiefs, but in ancient times it was not so. They had one, and one only, whose word was law for war or peace. In the Motu tribe, the ancestors of Boi Vagi, the late chief of Port Moresby, who died in the Christian faith in 1886, were great chiefs, and in his father's time he alone held the power. Wherever he went he was looked upon as the ruler of the Motu tribe, and was treated accordingly; pigs were killed, food was cooked, and large presents given to him. Since his death the chiefs have never been able to obtain all his power and influence, although the chief at Port Moresby is looked upon as the principal chief of the Motu by the people of that and other tribes. The younger branch of the family held the power of making raids to secure property, and the father of the robber chief was a noted man all along the coast in that particular science. When he proposed a raid on any particular village, he always

had a large number of daring spirits to listen to his proposals, and who longed for such work. The son, Amako, it seems, took after his father, and, as he grew up to manhood, was well educated in that particular department. When I knew him first he was a wild-looking savage, with the largest, longest, frizziest head of hair on the coast, or that I had seen in New Guinea. He in no way made any friendly advances to the missionary or teachers. His expression was sour and repellent, and gave the impression that he was always angry. He is about forty-five years of age, well built, and about five feet eight inches in height. He has two sisters as wives. He says that being sisters they do not disturb him by quarrelling, as the younger always submit to the elder. He would certainly be an ugly customer to deal with as an enemy, and some years ago the less any one had to do with him the better. He used to punish the slightest insult to himself or his friends, at once and satisfactorily, not by taking life, but by robbery. The arrival of the teachers, and Boi Vagi's becoming their friends, rather spoiled Amako's vocation, and he settled down in a sulky manner to watch the changes that might take place. To make things worse, he was a man who believed much in witchcraft, and was full of superstition, the kind of man that any one would find it difficult to win over. He says he never robbed without a cause, and never killed in his robbing raids. . . . Such was our friend Amako on the arrival of the teachers. Some time after Mr. Murray (of whom they still speak as an old friend) left, Amako attempted to burn his houses because he had no share in presents, and Boi Vagi somehow or other was left out. He did not wish the teachers to remain, and would rather they left. A few years ago he began attending services, and soon took an intelligent interest in them, which grew into a desire to change his mode of life. He is now a reformed man. His fierceness of expression has gone, the determined look remains. He is a man of will, seeking to do right. He has become an active preacher of Christianity, and evidence of this has already been given in Chapter III. (pp. 284-9).

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### NONCONFORMIST LIBERALS AND UNIONISTS.

THE meeting of the "Nonconformist Unionist Association" was in some of its aspects one of the most curious and suggestive incidents in the controversy of the hour. It was intended as a reply to the various protests of Nonconformist ministers and resolutions of Nonconformist meetings, and looked at in that light the gathering can hardly be described

as representative. Mr. T. W. Russell and Mr. de. Cobain are, doubtless, very admirable, and as they do not belong to the Episcopal Church, may be described as Nonconformists, but they have no real connection with English Nonconformity, and do not express its opinions. We know well enough that a considerable number of Nonconformists are opposed to Home Rule, whose conscientious differences from us we respect. But it by no means follows that they approve the action of the Unionist party, in sacrificing everything else for the sake of excluding Mr. Gladstone from power. It is quite possible that ecclesiastical and educational questions may arise which may force them to think whether they are not sacrificing too much for the luxury of forcing on Ireland a Government which has no sympathy with its people.

When Mr. Caine describes himself and his friends as the "cream" of Nonconformity, he may gratify himself, but he provokes only a laugh from others. It may be noted, however, that this vaunting seems to be characteristic of the party. We have long since learned (or at least if we have not it has not been for the want of persistent teaching) that in their ranks is all the intellect of the Liberal party. Professor Dicey seems to think that in them is to be found a monopoly of its virtue also. The following utterance of *The Spectator* on this point is a charming illustration :

Character, wherever it be wanting, is the admitted possession of the Liberal Unionists. The deep discredit which the Maamstrasna debate, and all the memories it evokes, has inflicted in different ways and in different degrees on every other Parliamentary connection, does not touch Lord Hartington and his followers. They can give weight enough to any party which receives their countenance.

Mr. Dicey and his friends, at all events, have no need to offer the old prayer that the Lord would give them a good conceit of themselves. No doubt they are the people, and not only wisdom but goodness also will die with them. What special credit belongs to Lord Hartington and "his connection" about the Maamstrasna debate is not very apparent. That

the Tories who then joined in the fierce assault upon Lord Spencer should now be posing as the champions of law and order is a grave political scandal. That Lord Hartington should support the politicians who thus played for the Irish vote is hardly less. We are equally at a loss to see how Mr. Gladstone is discredited in the matter. Let us hope that there is some better justification for the extreme claims advanced on behalf of our Liberal Unionists. We have never denied their "character," though we have always been unable to see that there was any superhuman virtue necessary to the part Lord Hartington has had to play. He has been perfectly straight, but surely this is not a quality peculiar to him. There are men just as honest in advocating the cause of the Irish peasantry as is Lord Hartington in defending the rights of the landlord. When, however, the herald sounds the trumpet and calls on us to admire his "character" and that of the Liberal Unionists not unnaturally ask what it all means.

There can be little doubt, however, that this kind of talk impresses some men. They like to be on the side of wealth, of authority, of fashion. But there are few classes with whom it is likely to be of less avail than Nonconformists. They have been too long accustomed to defy authority to be disturbed because they find themselves in opposition now. Their opinions were never fashionable; they never trusted to "chariots and horses" for their strength, and if they are to be turned aside from their purpose they must be met with some stronger argument than a taunt. It is perfectly true that even among Congregationalists and Baptists there may be found more dissentients from the views of the majority than on any question which has hitherto arisen. But there has always been a minority, and as Nonconformity has gathered force the Tory party has naturally been anxious to parade their sympathy. During the Beaconsfield *régime* there were some Congregationalists who, if they were not Jingoës, had very decided Imperialist tendencies. It is open to question whether, among the laity at all events, the dissentients were not as numerous then as now. At present there are

two names highly honoured in the Congregational ministry which give a factitious strength to the minority, though one of them has been quoted rather too freely on the Unionist side, and should rather be regarded as a mediator. Mr. Spurgeon has doubtless exerted considerable influence among the Baptists, whose Liberalism has always been of the most advanced type, and John Bright has affected Nonconformist laymen generally to a still greater extent. We are very strongly of opinion, however, that, with the exception of a limited number, the Nonconformists who have felt themselves compelled to separate from Mr. Gladstone on this question have never looked with favour upon the active support which the Radical Unionists have given to the Tory party. They are not content that the Irish question should be the pivot on which all their political sympathy and action should turn. Mr. Jesse Collings is a puzzle and an irritation to them. They do not comprehend this absurd adulation of politicians to whom he has all his life been opposed, and his speeches only serve to make them doubt whether they have done wisely in listening to such counsellors. Still there are some districts where there are a number of dissenting Unionists, and among them are some for whom we entertain the highest respect, and whose separation from us we sincerely deplore. For the most part, however, they are of the moderate Liberal party.

We repeat, however, this diversity is nothing new. It has always been so. When James II. published the "Declaration of Indulgence" there were some Dissenters who would have trusted him, and had their advice been followed the liberty of the nation would have been sacrificed and the memory of Dissenters covered with eternal infamy. They were the "cream" of Nonconformity in those days; that is, they were so regarded by themselves and the party to whom they tendered their support, and probably, if social position was the determining point, they were entitled to be so regarded. They were certainly the "cream" in this sense—the men who had found their way into the Corporations, rich aldermen and merchants, who were the pecuniary strength of the Dissenting interest at the time—who

played the part of Trimmers during the long contest for the abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts; and the delay in the repeal of these persecuting enactments was due partly to the vacillation and half-heartedness, to use no stronger term, of these wealthy Dissenters. So upon the Roman Catholic Emancipation Act, on the question of Free Trade, and more recently on points of Foreign Policy, there has been a minority among Dissenters. As the chairman of the Unionist meeting frankly acknowledged in his courteous and honest speech, there is a very strong majority—among Congregationalists and Baptists it might be described in much stronger language—in favour of a policy which will conciliate Ireland without weakening the tie which unites it to England, and so remove a scandal to our freedom and civilization.

We claim nothing more, except that we must maintain the right of the majority to express its opinion, and cannot understand why, if it is done in good temper, that should give any offence to those who dissent from it. Dissenters, if they are Liberals, must surely be too well accustomed to find themselves in a minority, and too practised in the work of turning a minority into a majority to be greatly disturbed by the fact that they are in a minority among their own brethren, especially seeing that they are in a majority in Parliament. The position which we, as Liberals, have taken has been accepted with a full knowledge of its disadvantages in obedience to our sense of righteousness alone. If the subject be looked at dispassionately, it must be admitted as somewhat extraordinary that so large a proportion of Nonconformist Liberals are in favour of Home Rule. There was nothing to create in them a prepossession on its behalf; indeed, they might have been prejudiced on the opposite side. Had there been a question as to the safety of Protestants, we should certainly have taken our place by their side, for we are Protestants of the Protestants. Our Protestantism indeed, because of its very thoroughness, has inclined us to the side of the Nationalists, for it has taught us faith in liberty and right. We do not believe that Protestantism has ever been strengthened by

that Orange party, who, with the watchwords of freedom on their lips, have ever proved themselves its worst enemies. The professed alarm as to the possible oppression of Protestants under a National government has always appeared to us the idlest of fears, especially when we remember that England would still have supreme power to prevent such injustice. Still there is no obvious reason why the Nonconformists should lean to the side of Irish Nationalism; while there are some considerations which might have inclined them to the other side. The Nationalist party have not established a claim to their gratitude by any service they have done to that cause of religious equality in which they are specially interested. For while Ireland has, partly by means of Dissenting help, got rid of an Established Church, its representatives have often hindered the progress of religious liberty in this country. Even now their interposition of the Irish question has delayed the discussion of Disestablishment, besides creating a schism in the ranks of its supporters. Of all sections of the Liberal party, there is none which has less cause to regard the Home Rule movement with favour, and yet there is none on which Unionism has made less impression, or whose members have given a more hearty support to their great chief.

Oh! some critics will say, in the last words is the secret of the whole. Loyalty to the "great chief" explains all. If it were so, there would be nothing discreditable in the feeling. It is curious, to say the least, that while Tories are making themselves ridiculous by the forms in which they are showing their idolatry of a dead chief, there are so many who claim to be Liberals whose one pleasure is to vilify our living hero. Such strange infatuation is, so far as we know, absolutely without parallel in history. Leaders have often alienated their followers by an overweening ambition, a supercilious arrogance, a half-heartedness in the common cause, or, to come down to more vulgar faults, a grasping nepotism. No charge of this kind can be brought against Mr. Gladstone. No statesman has ever furnished so little material for the criticism of his most bitter opponents.



Naturally, they have much to say against his policy; but here their attack upon him is an impeachment of Liberalism. The eagerness with which the Collier appointment and the Ewelme case were seized upon as matter for an indictment sufficiently proved the desire to establish a case against him, but the utter failure to suggest even the suspicion of a corrupt motive, or, indeed, the possibility of anything worse than an indifference to technical objections when a public good was to be secured, was a remarkable proof of his superiority to any such unworthy imputation. In truth, no statesman ever did such noble service for such scant reward. If offence there be in him, it is in the matter of his political faith, and probably in the case of many, even more in the religious principle on which it rests and by which it is governed. Of course, politicians whose Liberalism is a tradition from Whig fathers, or a faith in the superior wisdom of cultured men, do not sympathize with him, since they do not accept the fundamental principle of his political action—trust in the people. Mr. Courtney is an admirable example of the latter class. No man has less sympathy with old-fashioned Tory ideas, or is more likely to take an enlightened and even generous view of a question of public policy. There are few more able and independent politicians, and the firmness with which he has maintained the impartiality of the chair despite the strong pressure put upon him by the party to which he belongs, is an evidence not only of his fairness but also of his strength of character. But his influence is marred by the superior tone which he adopts, and his Liberalism is weakened by that distrust of the popular will, hardly suspected, perhaps, by himself, which is at the root of those fantastic schemes for the representation of minorities which diverts the attention of Sir John Lubbock even from the ants whom he is so fond of watching. Men like him must often be found in agreement with Mr. Gladstone, but their Liberalism is of a different type, and the point of separation was sure to be reached in his case just as in that of Lord Hartington.

Nonconformists follow Mr. Gladstone because his

Liberalism is more fully in harmony with their views. Even if in the chaos which has prevailed in Liberal circles, we were to be influenced by authority, we feel that the preponderating weight of opinion is all on the side of Mr. Gladstone, since the men who know best the inner life of Dublin Castle from personal experience are so largely in his favour. Lord Spencer alone is sufficient to outweigh a number of politicians, however eminent, who only look at the subject from outside, and the accession of Sir George Trevelyan to the same side adds to it a force, the strength of which may be measured by the truculence with which he has been assailed. But it is not they alone who have been forced by their own experience to a conclusion more or less favourable to Irish aspirations. Sir Robert Hamilton, than whom no one has had a larger acquaintance with Irish administration, was taken away from the post he was specially qualified to fill, and his professional career, with its promise of eminent distinction, suddenly and rudely checked because his experience at the Castle had taught him the imperative necessity of some measure of Home Rule. Sir Redvers Buller was sent to curse, but remained to bless. Poor Lord Carnarvon has been a kind of shuttlecock in this controversy, but amid all the statements and counter statements which have been made, it is at all events manifest that he could not accept the policy which will for ever remain identified with the name of Mr. Balfour. *The Times* raves from day to day about the Gladstonians and their Parnellite allies in a style which would lead the uninformed reader to suppose that the English friends of Home Rule were a body of credulous sentimentalists or heated partisans, without intelligence or patriotism, who are conniving at the crimes of boycotters and dynamitards. It is hard to say whether the insolence or the absurdity of such suggestions is most to be condemned. Professor Dicey, however, has gone a step beyond Mr. Buckle and Mr. Wilson, and has not shrunk from hurling a charge of Jacobinism against men who would be the first to suffer from the revolution which he accuses them of promoting, and some of whom have been

perilling their lives in service to the State while he has been working out constitutional theories in his study

The personal abuse which has been so large an element in these discussions may have had its effect on some, but there are others in whom it has roused the very opposite feelings. We read the speeches of some of the Unionist orators, and we search in vain for even the semblance of an argument. Invective against Mr. Gladstone, insults to those who do not accept Mr. Caine's or Mr. Collings' estimate of the Liberal leader and his action, extravagant eulogies upon the Tory Administration, take the place of reasoning. Can any sane man imagine that reasonable politicians will be affected by an oratory which ignores the merits of the case and deals chiefly in rude insult or blustering predictions of victory. It is all the less likely to be impressive because of the extraordinary change of tone towards the Tory party. The Aston Park riots are not yet four years old, and it is little more than two years since the exciting campaign of 1885 was closed. At that time the present Prime Minister and his associates were held up to public reprobation as the leaders of a party which was opposed to the people. They represented those who toil not neither do they spin, and who, by virtue of the power they enjoy, have shifted an unfair proportion of the burdens of the country on to the shoulders of those who do. Now we are invited to believe that these same men are paragons of virtue, statesmen raised up for the salvation of an empire menaced by the acts of the great Liberal statesman whom, at the earlier period, these Unionists were proud to serve. Is it expected that the judgments which Mr. Chamberlain and his friends helped us to form will be thus speedily reversed? Verily no. Their speeches do not inspire confidence in the Government which they are covering with their praise, but they go far to destroy confidence in themselves. The effect of such extraordinary changes is demoralizing to the political life of the nation in a very high degree, and, at the same time, it must be specially injurious to those who, having taught the world to regard these Tory chiefs as enemies of popular progress, omit now no opportunity for proclaiming their

patriotism and wisdom. For these Tories have not changed. Their measures, of which the Unionists boast as signs of their conversion to Liberal principles, are essentially anti-popular in character. The licensing clauses of the Local Government Bill are themselves sufficient to condemn it, since for the first time they give a legal recognition to a vested right, the compensation for which would cost hundreds of millions of money. So with the Budget, whose praises have been so loudly sounded forth, but which, the more closely it is examined, is the more closely seen to be framed in the interest of those classes with whom a Tory Government has always had most sympathy.

But it is in the Irish administration in which the real spirit of the Government lies, and it is this which has most excited the indignation of Nonconformists. Occupying an outside position we may possibly be able to take a more unprejudiced view than the immediate combatants. We can detect faults on both sides, and are not compelled by any party necessity to connive at what we do not approve. We are as free to disapprove of some of Mr. O'Brien's utterances as we are to condemn Mr. Balfour's cynical calculations as to the results of the imprisonment of the Irish leader. There is no reason why we should lean either to Mr. Blunt or Mr. Balfour in the unhappy controversy about their conversation in the autumn. We do not like either the "Plan of Campaign" or boycotting, but, on the other hand, we are not committed to the extreme view of their moral enormity, which poor Matthew Arnold exposed in his usual lucid style, from his ordinary position of the "superior person" who can lecture even his own friends. Looking at the subject, then, as law-abiding Englishmen who hate violence and disorder of every kind, but who hate also the cant of officialism, there are some facts which seem to us incontestible. Take this letter from Corporal Christian:—

We had a fair go in. We got about two hundred in a large mill holding a meeting. We had orders to cut any one down if they attempted to escape. You may guess we were in our glory. We made seventy-five arrests. Nearly all of them had their heads cut

open. One man had his ear cut off, and several had their fingers cut off. There was a reporter had three of his ribs and his arm broken. My mare kicked him, unfortunately. As we went through the streets we sang "God save the Queen," and "Rule Britannia." Some of the people went down on their knees to us, but we showed them no mercy. This is the first time we had a chance to get at them, so that we gave them a good thrashing.

Mr. Balfour sneers at this as a mass of absurdities, but he does not confute statements made in the freedom of a private letter from a soldier to his brother. This attack upon an unarmed people is only in keeping with the prosecution of men whose sole offence is that they are opposed to the policy of the present Government. Their trials before partisan magistrates are a mockery of justice and law; the increase of sentences on appeal is a piece of monstrous tyranny, made all the worse because of the disgraceful shuffling of the Chief Secretary; and the mode in which the prisoners are treated sheds a lurid light upon the alleged conversation between Mr. Balfour and Mr. Blunt, the substantial accuracy of which is evident even from the reply of the former. The whole action stirs up a righteous indignation, which is only made more intense by the excuses of Liberal (?) apologists for Orange tyranny. We are as jealous for the honour of our country as Mr. Jesse Collings or any other Unionist, and it is on this very account that we shall never cease to protest against a Government which, in contradiction to all the pledges given at the last general election, pursues a policy in Ireland that it dare not attempt in England. If any argument were needed to induce us to persevere in this action, we should find it in the marvellous patience with which the Irish people are passing through this reign of terror. They have faith in English sympathies, and that sympathy will not be wanting.

Mr. John Bright is concerned about Nonconformist ministers, and unwilling that they should be drawn into this controversy. He is like many people besides who deprecate the interference of Christian ministers in politics whenever it is probable that their influence will be cast in

opposition to their views. There are, however, one or two points deserving attention in this grumble of Mr. Bright. He is not the man from whom we should have expected a remonstrance which is really based upon the most clerical view of the Christian ministry. This is not the first time when Christian ministers have acted together on a great question of the hour. One of the most memorable incidents in the Anti-Corn Law struggle was the Ministerial Conference held in Manchester in 1842. We have before us some amusing letters between Dr. Halley and Mr. John Blackburn, which show how much that time resembled the present. There was then, as now, a difference of opinion among Congregationalists, and the same kind of talk was common then which we are hearing every day. Mr. Blackburn represented the caution of the London ministers, and Dr. Halley, who was fresh from the metropolis, shared his feeling. The alarm with which the latter contemplated the action of his brethren is very entertaining as well as instructive. The bolder men proved to be right. It is needless to say Mr. Bright was not among their censors at the time. He had not then been aroused to the impropriety of Nonconformist ministers taking part in a political movement. No doubt he would insist that there was a difference in the nature of the two questions, but an impartial judge would pretty certainly determine that the only real difference is in the fact that in 1842 the ministers were in agreement with Mr. Bright, whereas now they differ. Of course we are criticized, and severely criticized. So were our brethren of the Anti-Corn Law Conference. But time brings its revenges. It is generally admitted now that the men of 1842 did a service to their country. May we not, even while entertaining the profoundest respect for the Nonconformists who cannot unite with us in our present action, look forward confidently to a time not far distant when it will be recognized that we, too, chose the nobler part, when we refused to despair of the cause of liberty, and were bold enough to advocate a measure of complete justice to Ireland. And may we not also reasonably ask the friends who differ from us to believe that in maintain-

ing a position which is not without its difficulties, we are influenced by a sincere attachment to those great principles for which we have always contended. We support Home Rule for Ireland as the only just and practicable mode of settling a long-standing controversy. We admire and follow Mr. Gladstone because we believe that no statesman has been more solicitous to apply Christian principles to national affairs, but above all we are faithful to Liberalism itself, and for that very reason cannot enter into alliance with a party which has always opposed true political progress.

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#### MODERN GUIDES OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT.\*

THE most interesting and suggestive collection of Mr. R. H. Hutton's essays, which has just been published, is itself sufficient to indicate the difficulties which surround the path of a religious teacher in these times, and to show the folly of those who demand that he should remain unaffected by the potent influences which are at work everywhere around him. Thomas Carlyle, the massive thinker, whose chief work was the "graphic and humorous denunciation of all conventional falsehoods and pretentiousness, or what was presumed to be conventional falsehood and pretentiousness;" Cardinal Newman, the great reactionary teacher, who is hardly more remarkable as the most distinguished convert whom Rome has won since the Reformation than as the real author of the extraordinary revolution which has taken place in the Anglican Church; Matthew Arnold, the apostle of "sweetness and light," who has just passed away after spending so much of his best power in the attempt to laugh or persuade us out of the old faith, and to substitute for its most precious truths some shadowy phrases which represent no solid belief; George Eliot, with her "utter

\* *Essays on Some of the Modern Guides of English Thought in Matters of Faith.* By RICHARD HOLT HUTTON (Macmillan and Co).



powerlessness to believe that of which she had no immediate evidence before her," setting forth a dreary scepticism with all the art which her remarkable genius could employ; and Frederick Denison Maurice, full of faith and spiritual earnestness, intent on clearing away some of the theological ideas which had obscured, if they had not actually misrepresented, Christianity, hampered in his endeavour by the formularies which he had described, and, partly in consequence of that restraint, exposing himself to charges of heresy, are the "modern guides" whose characteristics are here discussed. It is hardly possible to run through even the list of names without being impressed with the force of that "modern thought" of which they are such brilliant exponents, or to think without a smile of the valiant students at the Metropolitan College who have so nobly resolved to do battle against it. It is very easy to call on Christian teachers to eschew its influence, but how is it to be done? The literature of a period is a factor in the formation of public opinion which it is impossible to dismiss with a wave of the hand. It has an awkward habit of compelling attention, and the only rational mode of dealing with it is to try and understand what it has to say, and then to meet it with the gospel of Christ.

Mr. Hutton has exceptional qualifications for the task he has here discharged with so much efficiency, of analyzing the characteristics of these several teachers, and estimating their influence upon the age. The essays may be regarded from a literary and from a theological standpoint. The author has a fine critical faculty and a deeply religious nature, and there is opportunity for the exhibition of his high qualities in both respects here. We like him better either as critic or theologian than as politician or publicist. Even in this latter character we can recognize his endeavours to be fair, though so far as the Irish question is concerned, they are conspicuous by their utter failure. The most curious feature of the case is his success in persuading himself that he, at least, has preserved the judicial temper, and that while on both sides there is the violence of the partisan with its attendant misrepresentations, with

him there is a careful meting out of justice to all parties. Nothing could be more irritating to an opponent, and it is not wonderful, therefore, that *The Spectator* has made itself more offensive to a great many earnest Liberals than any other Unionist organ, though many may seem to be more bitter. We have not ourselves felt, partly perhaps because we have been so long accustomed to the journalist's mode of dealing with Nonconformists. It is only just to add our belief that in both cases the writer is wholly unconscious of the way in which his criticisms strike their objects. There is less of this tone in these essays. They have, indeed, something of the same subtle flavour, but the philosophic insight, which is often a trifle ridiculous when exercised upon the ordinary questions of practical politics, is much more in its own place when the writer is dealing with the gravest theories in religion and philosophy. On these subjects Mr. Hutton has read widely and thought deeply. What is perhaps of equal importance, he is sufficiently catholic to be able to sympathize with every one of these teachers, widely as they are separated from each other. He is, of course, liable here, as in his political writings, to be under the influence of prejudice. He has his own religious opinions, which have been formed with equal intelligence and independence, and it is impossible that they should not to some extent colour his estimate of these teachers, but we are very much impressed by the general fairness as well as by the acuteness of the judgments expressed.

We cannot undertake to examine all of them in detail; we must satisfy ourselves with a much briefer reference to any of them than its intrinsic merits deserve. "Carlyle is truly said to have had a keen appreciation of the religion of the volcano, the thunder-cloud, and the lightning flash, mingled with a certain grim enjoyment of the spectacle of the inadequacy of the human struggle." Our author is not insensible to the strong points of the Chelsea sage, but he is able to write about him with a discriminating judgment which, had it been more generally exercised, might have been useful to the philoso-

pher himself, by saving him from errors into which the foolish adulation of those who looked up to him as an oracle helped to betray him. Mr. Hutton does well to remind his readers of the injurious influence which Carlyle's teaching exerted upon the public mind "in at least five different catastrophes of the great political decade between 1861 and 1871." It may be doubted whether in any case it was really happy. His ideas about the negro undoubtedly led many Englishmen to sympathize with the South in the great civil war in America, and with Governor Eyre in his dealings with the negroes of Jamaica, and especially in the execution of Gordon. It may be that in espousing the cause of Prussia against Denmark, Austria, and France successively, he formed a sounder judgment, but it must not be forgotten that in lending his influence in favour of "one of the earliest and most cynical of the acts of international violence for which the last twenty-five years in the history of Europe have been remarkable," the appropriation of Schleswig-Holstein, which prepared the way for all the subsequent aggrandizement of Germany—he did much to form an unhealthy public opinion which at the present hour is a serious difficulty in all European policy. In this nineteenth century of boasted civilization and progress, there has been a drift back towards the old maxim that might is right, and Carlyle is largely responsible for it. It is, indeed, in harmony with the spirit of his entire teachings, which are well characterized by Mr. Hutton. As he well says, despite his incessant denunciation of shams and phantasms, "his own religion was not free from cant," but it was a distinctly anti-Christian cant. It was not that he rejected certain doctrines, but that his spirit was altogether alien from that of the gospel. There is great acuteness in the following observations :

I conceive, too, that at the root of Carlyle's transcendental mysticism, was a certain contempt for the raw material of human nature, as inconsistent with the Christian view, and an especial contempt for the particular effect produced upon that raw material by what he understood to be the most common result of conversion. I think his view of Christianity—reverently as he always or almost always spoke of the person of Christ—was as of a religion that had something too much of

love in it, something slightly mawkish; and I believe that if he could but have accepted the old Calvinism, its inexorable decrees would in many respects have seemed to him more like the ground system of creation than the gospel either of Chalmers or of Irving. His love of despots who had any ray of honesty or insight in them, his profound belief that mankind should try and get such despots to order their doings for them, his strange hankerings after the institution of slavery as the only reasonable way in which the lower races of men might serve their apprenticeship to the higher races—all seems to me a sort of reflection of the Calvinistic doctrine that life is a subordination to a hard taskmaster, directly or by deputy, and that so far from grumbling over its severities, we must just grimly set to work and be thankful it is not worse than it is (p. 35).

We very much doubt whether George Eliot has exercised so much influence over the religious thinking of the day as is supposed. She was a woman of extraordinary genius but the more philosophical of her works are never likely to be popular to any wide extent, and it is questionable whether the select circle by whom their literary skill is appreciated will be largely influenced by their religious opinions. But on this point we cannot linger. To us the most interesting portions of this volume are the essays on the two great Oxford thinkers—the veteran cardinal, who is still with us, and the distinguished critic and poet who has just been removed in a manner so tragic and impressive. Mr. Hutton truly says:

Surely there is no greater marvel in our age than that it has felt profoundly the influence of both, and appreciated the greater qualities of both—the leader who, with bowed head and passionate self-distrust, nay, with “many a pause of prayer and fear,” has led hundreds back to surrender their judgment to a Pope whose rashness Dr. Newman’s own ripe culture ultimately condemned; and the poet who, in some of the most pathetic verses of modern times, has bewailed the loss of the very belief which, in some of the most flippant and frigid of the diatribes of modern times, he has done all that was in his power to destroy (p. 49).

It is perhaps hardly less remarkable that there should be found a writer who has not only studied both men, but shows such an extraordinary capacity for understanding both, and while regarding both with the highest admiration, is yet able to point out the defects of their respec-

tive positions. The following passage, part of a criticism on Dr. Newman's view of an infallible Church, is capable of application to those who, while opposed to his principles, are unconsciously, perhaps, seeking some infallible standard of their own.

How should an infallible authority—even if one existed—on the dogmatic truths involved in revelation, imply the right understanding of these truths, unless the believer be guided by the Spirit of God in receiving them? The same words mean totally different things to the humble mind and the arrogant mind, to the selfish mind and to the self-denying. Even the infallible human authority could inculcate only a lesson of error and illusion when addressing itself to a fallible and sinful believer. I cannot for the life of me see how the infallible human authority for dogma could, even if it existed, be of any service to rebellious, misguided, passionate men, unless it could infuse the grace to understand spiritually, as well as authorize the right form of words to be understood. Surely revelation, once communicated, must live and exert itself, and deepen for itself the spiritual channels in which it is to run, just as the original moral teaching, engraved both on tables of stone and on the heart, has lived and exerted itself, and deepened for itself the moral channels in which it is to run. Both revelations have been misunderstood; both have been perverted; both have been defied; both have been ridiculed; both have been scorned; yet both have exerted an ever deepening and widening influence, and have found out the true hearts for which they were intended. I cannot help thinking, then, that Dr. Newman's belief, that the most fitting power to subdue the anarchy of human passions and intellectual pride is an infallible Church, is an error, and an error of that most serious kind which by throwing the Church, which boasts infallibility, off its guard, produces an abundant crop of special dangers and mistakes (p. 82).

Matthew Arnold was, as might have been expected, a great favourite with Mr. Hutton, as indeed what cultured man is there with whom he was not a favourite. His banter was sometimes not a little irritating, and his apparent self-satisfaction even more so, and yet it was impossible even for an earnest Nonconformist to dislike him. The marvellous charm of his style conceals a number of defects in argument, and covers a multitude of offences in spirit and temper. But in truth his temper was never bitter, not even cynical. His love for coining nicknames in which he was so proficient was rather a play of humour than anything else. It is to be

feared indeed that the subtle charm of his writings has served to conceal the dangerous tendency of much of his teaching. We do not propose to discuss his general religious influence at present, but it is impossible to deny that in its whole tendency it was antagonistic to historic and dogmatic Christianity, and indeed to any real faith in God Himself. "The Stream of Tendency, not ourselves, which makes for Righteousness," is not, and cannot be God, and it is worse than useless for men in professed charity to try and persuade themselves or others that it is. What is said of it may be employed as an indirect and reluctant testimony to the being of a God, but that is not what it is intended to be. The "secret of Jesus" is really nothing better than the endeavour on Mr. Arnold's part to get rid of the distinctive teaching of the Master. The Gospels, as we have them, are full of what he calls *aberglaube*, "over-belief." His view of the resurrection of our Lord is expressed in the well-known verse,

Now he is dead ! far hence he lies  
In the lone Syrian town ;  
And on his grave with shining eyes  
The Syrian stars look down.

Mr. Hutton analyzes his teaching with great care, and the general result is perhaps best expressed in the following passage :

"Religion," says Mr. Arnold, "is morality touched with emotion." But surely morality cannot be "touched with emotion" without reason, or at least excuse, for the emotion it is to excite. And yet this is what Mr. Arnold's language seems to point at. In one of his American lectures he appears to say that the emotions will remain even though the objects which properly excite them disappear; and in another passage of the same lecture he nevertheless intimates that even the very same thought may be so expressed as either to excite emotion or not to excite it, the difference between the two modes of expression being, except in its actual effect, quite undiscernible. But if religion depends on an accident of that kind, religion is an accident itself. An intention to make for righteousness rightly excites emotion, but a tendency and an intention are different. Plague, pestilence, and famine, in God's hand, have often made for righteousness, but without faith in God, plague, pestilence, and famine are more likely to touch immorality with emotion than to touch morality with it (p. 110).

There are other passages we should gladly have extracted had space permitted, for even in the present state of softened feeling in regard to the eminent man who has been so suddenly taken away from us, it is well that we should have the utter baselessness of his religious teaching so temperately and so fairly pointed out. Mr. Hutton's estimate of Mr. Arnold as a poet is very high, higher than we can accept. While he believes that his curious earnestness and ability in attempting the impossible as a religious teacher will soon be a mere curiosity of literature, he holds that he will have a permanent place as a poet possibly above that of any poet of the eighteenth century except Burns, and that he will have the sixth, if not the fourth or fifth place among poets of the nineteenth century. He supports his view with characteristic earnestness and ability, but greatly as we admire much of Mr. Arnold's poetry, this estimate seems to us exaggerated, but this of course is a matter of taste. We have done but scanty justice to the value, and indeed the charm, of these essays, which present in comparatively short space some of the most striking and impressive features of our modern literature. The book is wonderfully rich in wise and suggestive thought.

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#### THE BAPTIST UNION.

THE happy solution of the difficult problem which threatened the Baptist Union with a wide-spread division will be hailed as a grateful surprise not only by earnest Nonconformists, but by all who care more for the true religion than for the teachings of a party. The hardly concealed pleasure of some outside the ranks of Baptists and Congregationalists in the unseemly strife which has been waged during the last six months has been one of the most painful features of the controversy. Is it too much to hope that those who have been ready prematurely to exult in the troubles which for a time seemed to be



attendant on the exercise of liberty will be as free now to confess that in the true brotherhood of Christian men who understand one another has been found a secret of unity and peace which the manufacturers of tests and formularies have never been able to discover. It would be foolish to expect that discussion will cease, and provided it is carried on in the spirit of Christian charity and with a due sense of responsibility, there is no reason why it should be deprecated. The attempt to suppress the free utterance of opinion by reckless accusations of heresy on the one hand, and sneers at old fogeyism and tyranny on the other, is one cause of the unrest which prevails in certain quarters, and which, wherever it is found, is a source of weakness. Tennyson has taught us all a lesson in that graphic picture of his friend who had reached a strong and abiding faith through a manly battle with doubt :

He faced the spectres of the mind,  
And laid them : thus he came at length  
To find a stronger faith his own.  
And Power was with him in the night  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,  
But in the darkness and the cloud ;  
As over Sinai's peaks of old  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

There is a world of wisdom here, as in other suggestions of "In Memoriam." The Church will never find its true strength until it is able thus to face the questionings even within its own borders, and instead of silencing them by sentences of excommunication to submit them to the test of calm and searching inquiry. So if there shall be, as there is pretty sure to be, continued sifting of principles, it need not distress any mind so long as we preserve the spirit of Christ, while seeking to learn the will of Christ. But separation has been averted, and if we are to judge by the manifestations at the meeting, a spirit of brotherly love has been awakened, which will cast out the evil spirit of suspicion that has been abroad.

It must not be forgotten, however, that Mr. Spurgeon's attitude to the Union remains unchanged. On the other hand, in accepting the report of the Council, the Assembly has endorsed its resolution, that his impeachment of the orthodoxy of the denomination has not been sustained by evidence, and therefore, of course, ought not to have been brought. Mr. Spurgeon himself may now be held to have withdrawn these charges, for in the April number of *The Sword and Trowel*, he says—

Those communities which avowedly confess the truth of God can deal with the spirit of unbelief, at least in a measure; but those bodies of men which hold no settled doctrines, and make no profession of believing anything definite, are like houses with open doors, inviting the unclean spirit to enter, and take up his abode. We have tried to deal with the spirit of error in its abstract form; but we have also recommended, as a practical action on the behalf of the Baptist Denomination (which we believe to be upon the whole sound in the faith), that it should accept an Evangelical basis. Its churches and associations in most cases have such a basis; why not the Union which is made up of them? This question is to come before the Baptist Union at its next general meeting. Should the proposal of an Evangelical basis be carried out, we shall greatly rejoice, for it may be a rebuke to the incipient party of error, which has of late talked so exceeding loudly; but if this is not done, other and stronger measures must be taken, which will enable faithful men to bear their testimony without having it marred by their fellowship with evil.

Our friend here cuts the ground from under his own feet. Churches make up the Baptist Union, and if they have an Evangelical basis, what possible need can there be of any other? The Union, composed of Evangelical churches, and of them only, must be Evangelical. There can be no occasion for doctrinal tests seeing that every church admits to baptism and its fellowship such only as profess their faith, and give evidence that their profession is sincere. No doubt churches sometimes fail to detect hypocrisy, or to reveal self-deception to the candidate himself. But this is only an infirmity which they share in common with all human institutions. It is a small thing to say that this practical test is as effectual as any doctrinal formulary has ever been. However, it is useless to discuss this now. The Evangelical

basis has been accepted, though, unfortunately, there is no indication that Mr. Spurgeon will resume his place among his brethren. Still it is a great point gained that he declares himself satisfied of the general soundness of the Baptist denomination. Whether he should have constituted himself a judge of his brethren in this respect is a point which can be determined only by his own conscience. This much only must we say. Had he been present at the magnificent gathering at the City Temple, and heard the singularly touching terms in which he was referred to by Mr. Glover, in one of those prayers which thrill Christian hearts to their very depths, and heard also the fervent response on the part of the assembly, he would have understood how strong is his hold even upon those who have felt compelled most strongly to dissent from his recent proceedings, and perhaps also to suspect that the union of Christian sympathy is a much deeper and nobler thing than a mere agreement in creed.

In looking at the resolution as amended, and reading it in the light of the speeches, the difficulty is to understand the meaning of the excitement of the last six months. We must confess to considerable sympathy with one of the speakers who was anxious to know exactly what had been done. Perhaps his secret feeling was that if it was what it seemed, it was too good to be true. On this point, however, his mind may certainly be at rest. The speeches on both sides were so frank that there hardly seems room for the possibility of mistake. Most heartily do we rejoice in the issue which has been reached. As we looked round upon the body of noble men who form the Union, we could not but feel that any one who broke such a fellowship, and so weakened the power of the Baptist Churches for good, would incur very grave responsibility.

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#### CURRENT LITERATURE.

*Fifty Years Ago.* By WALTER BESANT. (Chatto and Windus.) Mr. Walter Besant appears in this volume in a new character. In

some of his novels he has shown a wonderful capacity for reproducing the leading features of a former age, so as to make it live before us; but this is the first book, so far as we know, in which he has turned entirely aside from the paths of fiction, and has given us a series of historic sketches, or perhaps we should rather say photographs, of London as it was half a century ago. He takes a wide and comprehensive survey, travels from club-land to the shums, conducts us through the streets or takes us into the tavern, introduces us to the orators of Parliament or to the leading wits and poets of the time. We cannot say that he is equally at home everywhere, but he never fails to be pleasant and amusing. For his sketches of Parliament at the time he is indebted to Grant's "Random Recollections," a book which was more entertaining than profitable, and which always recalls to our memory a trivial incident of our own boyhood. It happened at a missionary breakfast at Liverpool, when Mr. Binney was present. He was called upon to speak, and after many protestations that he had come under a distinct engagement that he was not to speak, he rose at length, evidently not in a very pleasant humour. "The writer of 'Some Sketches of the London Pulpit' distinctly says, 'Mr. Binney cannot speak.'" "The book," exclaimed Dr. Raffles, who was in the chair, "is full of lies!" and so disposed of Mr. Grant's accuracy and Mr. Binney's ill-humour at the same time. As we read some of the remarks quoted from Mr. Grant in the chapter on Parliament, we could not but feel that Mr. Grant was not only sometimes inaccurate in statement, but still more frequently wrong in his estimates. Mr. Besant has given his sketch of Mr. Gladstone, who was then a very young man, italicizing some of his forecasts, that we may see how far the early characteristics of the great orator have been kept up through life. Mr. Grant pronounced him no statesman. Possibly there are some even to-day who are so blinded by prejudice as to endorse that judgment now; but no candid man will thus ignore the wonderful power of the great Liberal chief who has stamped his mark so indelibly on the legislation of the last fifty years, that even party spite can hardly deny it. We should say that Mr. Besant is not strong in politics, and though he does not say anything very distinct we fear that he has yielded somewhat to the influence of the present idea of society about Mr. Gladstone. His friends can well afford to wait. It will not be many years before this idea will be regarded as a craze for which it is difficult to find any sufficient explanation. As regards the Church and the Nonconformists, Mr. Besant writes:

"In the Church the old Calvinism is well-nigh dead; even the Low Church of the present day would have seemed, fifty years ago, a kind of veiled popery. And the Church has grown greater and stronger. She will be greater and stronger still when she enlarges her borders to admit the great bodies of Nonconformists. The old grievances exist no longer; there are no pluralists; there is no non-resident vicar; the small benefices are improved; Church architecture has revived;

the Church services are rendered with loving and jealous care; the old reproaches are no longer hurled at the clergy; fat and lazy shepherds they certainly are not; careless and perfunctory they cannot now be called; even if they are less scholarly, which must be sorrowfully admitted, they are more earnest. The revival of the Church service has produced its effect also upon Dissent. Its ministers are more learned and more cultured; their congregations are no longer confined to the humbler trading class; their leaders belong to society; their writers are among the best *littérateurs* of the day."

We do not know that the current opinion of society in general, and especially of literary society, could be more fairly expressed. There is no want of kindly feeling towards Nonconformity; but, on the contrary, a desire to judge it favourably. There is certainly no appreciation of the strength of its position, or of the kind of differences which separate it from the Established Church. But we should not come to Mr. Besant, or to a book like this, for serious views on grave controversies. His intention is rather to give us a general view of life as it was, especially in London, fifty years ago, and the picture is sufficiently instructive. There is a general impression that we have made considerable social progress in the period, but of its full extent comparatively few have an adequate conception. Mr. Besant helps us to estimate the distance which we have travelled during the period. The book is admirably got up, and some of the illustrations are extremely well done. We commend to our lady readers the picture of a lady of fashion of the year 1837.

*King or Knave?* By R. E. FRANCILLON. 3 vols. (Chatto and Windus.) Mr. Francillon has in this tale undertaken an extremely difficult task, and it is only fair to say that he has attained as much success as was possible. The very conditions of the story entailed the necessity of considerable art in the construction of the plot, and Mr. Francillon has shown himself fully equal to the demand. Throughout we have abundant evidence of the extreme care which has been bestowed upon the work. As the result the tale is full of life, movement, and interest. The action is so rapid and exciting that the attention of the reader is never suffered to flag, but at the same time, the story, though verging on the sensational, does not outrage probability in any violent fashion. But there is much more in this volume than a story. Some of its pictures of life are very striking. The town of Marchgrave will linger in the memory. Its excitement about its docks, its worship of its hero, the humours of its election, its petty gossip, and still more miserable scandal, are drawn to the life. Then in the portraiture of character we have a new and original conception in Cynthea. Draycott Morland is another creation of the author's, and a decidedly clever one. But the most difficult, and at the same time most effective, piece of workmanship, is the hero, who endeavours to unite the opposite characters of King in Marchgrave, and Knave in London.

The peculiarity of the circumstances which made this even possible, the incessant complications and difficulties which the keeping up of this duality produced, the succession of crimes into which it led the man, and last, not least, his own curious introspection with the reflections on himself, are all well conceived and admirably wrought out. The book is clever at every point.

*Wit and Wisdom of Samuel Johnson.* Selected and arranged by GEORGE BIRKBECK HILL, D.C.L. (Oxford : Clarendon Press.) What is it that makes Dr. Johnson universally popular? A more uncompromising and bigotted Tory, or one who was pronounced and trenchant in the statement of his opinions, there could not be; yet in an age which has broken loose from the restraints with which men of his type would have fettered it, he has as high a reputation as in days when his influence was supreme. It cannot be denied that in some of the stories that are told about him he talks very much like a bully, but even that does not seem to destroy, hardly even to weaken, the admiration with which he is regarded. Take such a story as that of his answer to Lady Macleod, who, after she had poured out sixteen cups of tea already, meekly suggested that a small basin would save her trouble and be more agreeable. "I wonder, madam," answered he, roughly, "why all the ladies ask me such questions? It is to save yourselves trouble, madam, not me." The lady was silent, and resumed her task. Poor woman, she was cowed, as well she might be. In any other man such conduct would have been voted boorishness, but in the case of Johnson it only provokes a smile. There must be something to explain the indulgence shown to such foibles, and it is found in the character of the man himself. It is very trite to say that Johnson has been singularly happy in his biographer. Boswell's work is a perfect photograph, and the personal devotion which led a man thus carefully to reproduce the commonest sayings and doings of another, itself says something for him who inspires it. A hero-worshipper may be a very second-rate man, or even of a lower grade, but there must be some qualities, either ideal or actual, in his hero, or he could not have any reverence for him. In Johnson there was no lack of intellectual power, and a certain moral strength which could not but affect natures far greater than poor Boszy could ever boast. We are impressed by his massiveness everywhere, but we are far more attracted by his genuine humanity. Dr. Birkbeck Hill, who thoroughly understands him, evidently regards this as the great secret of his attractiveness. He says: "The most striking quality in Johnson was his wisdom, his knowledge of the whole art of life. Gibbon describes 'the majestic sense of Thurlow.' If common sense can be thought of as invested with majesty, it is seen in all its stateliness much more in the dictionary-maker than in the great Lord Chancellor. But mere common sense would never have made Johnson all that he is to us. Benjamin Franklin had more common sense than the frame of any single man seems capable of containing or support-

ing. But who loves common sense when it stands alone? It must be dashed by the failings of men of like affections with ourselves. It must at times be crossed by the playful extravagances of a wayward humour. It must be joined not with a cold and calculating selfishness, but with a tenderness and a pity for those whose want of it has brought them to misery." Further, there was in Johnson a singular absence of affectation, and a complete freedom from any effort to play a part. "I never considered," he says, "whether I should be a grave man or a merry man, but just let inclination for the time have its course." He knew how to laugh, and that laugh was irresistible. When to this perfect naturalness and geniality was added the extraordinary ability and learning of the man, it is not surprising that he should be a general favourite. To make a fair selection from the sayings and writings of such a man was no easy task, but no man was more competent for its discharge than Dr. Birkbeck Hill. We have had in *The Pall Mall* lately one of those curious articles in which it delights, on what it is pleased to call the pocket-Bibles of politicians. Dr. Birkbeck's little volume would form an admirable vade mecum of this class. You cannot open a page without finding some suggestive aphorism, some brilliant epigram, or some amusing story. We cannot do better than give a few specimens. Here is a saying full of wisdom: "It may be observed, in general, that the future is purchased by the present. It is not possible to secure distant or permanent happiness but by the forbearance of some immediate gratification." How profound, too, is the wisdom of the following remark about travels: "He that would travel for the entertainment of others should remember that the great object of remark is human life." Of how many controversies is this true? "'Dr. Farmer,' said Johnson, 'you have done that which never was done before; that is, you have completely finished a controversy beyond all further doubt.' 'There are some critics,' answered Farmer, 'who will adhere to their old opinions.' 'Ah,' said Johnson, 'that may be true; for the limbs will quiver and move when the soul is gone.'" How well does he expose the evils of flattery. "Flattery pleases very generally. In the first place the flatterer may think what he says to be true; but in the second place, whether he thinks so or not, he certainly thinks those whom he flatters of consequence enough to be flattered. He that is much flattered soon learns to flatter himself; we are commonly taught our duty by fear or shame, and how can they act upon the man who hears nothing but his own praises? . . . At Sir Joshua Reynolds, one evening, Hannah More met Dr. Johnson. She very soon began to pay her court to him in the most fulsome strain. 'Spare me, I beseech you, dear madam,' was his reply. She still *laid it on*. 'Pray, madam, let us have no more of this;' he rejoined. Not paying any attention to these warnings, she continued still her eulogy. At length, provoked by this indelicate and vain obtrusion of compliment, he exclaimed, 'Dearest lady, consider with yourself what your flattery is worth before you bestow it so freely.'" We could multiply such extracts, but our space forbids.



*More Than He Bargained For.* By J. ROBERT HUTCHINSON. (T. Fisher Unwin.) This is an Indian story, and has this great recommendation, that it makes us feel as though we were in the midst of Indian society. We are taken into a region with which we are not made familiar even in ordinary pictures of Indian life. The plot is laid in the country where the English population is scanty. Two or three families have to provide entertainment for each other. Outside their little circle is an entirely different world into which we are allowed to make occasional excursions, and which has its own objects of interest. It is a capital story full of movement and incident, bringing out some of the best and worst features of English life under such conditions, and pervaded by sentiment very much in advance of the Anglo-Indian feeling for which indeed there is an unconcealed contempt. The writer does justice to the missionary and his work, and treats as it deserves the customary cant of pride and impiety about the niggers who have no souls, and who seem to exist only for the gratification and service of their selfish and arrogant white masters.

*The Making of the Great West, 1512-1883.* By SAMUEL ADAMS DRAKE. With many illustrations and maps. (T. Fisher Unwin.) Mr. Drake has here followed up his interesting and useful little work, entitled, "The Making of New England," by another work similar in size and get-up on the "Making of the Great West." Like its predecessor, it is intended to occupy a position midway between the larger and lesser histories. Without going at all into detail it gives us a clear, succinct, and sufficient account of the rise and early growth of the Great West. The writer is evidently master of his theme, and is thus able to bring it before the minds of his readers in such a way that they can readily get an idea of it as a whole. He is specially happy in the arrangement of his materials. The volume is divided into three parts, called groups. In the first group Mr. Drake shows the work done by the three great rival Powers—the Spaniards, the French, and the English—in civilizing the American continent. As on the European continent so on the American, three successive waves of population passed over the country. The Spaniards who came first, and were the discoverers of the country, found no difficulty in effecting a conquest of it and a settlement in it; and the story of their explorations and discoveries, as well as of their victories over the Indians, forms one of the most romantic chapters of modern history. The French, who were the next great Power to turn their attention to the New Continent, did so in order that they might find in it new outlets for their commerce and fisheries, and the extraordinary success which they achieved in this direction was due largely to their power of adapting themselves to the original inhabitants of the country in such a way as to win their confidence and secure their co-operation. The interest of the story of these American beginnings, however,

culminates in the third section, wherein we see the Anglo-Saxon race first gaining foothold in Canada by the treaty of Utrecht, and then slowly taking possession of the entire country. In the second group Mr. Drake describes the birth of the American idea, and traces the gradual evolution of America as an independent and leading Power among the nations of the world. The third group contains a very graphic and glowing description of the discovery and working of the gold mines in California and Colorado. The book is written in a lucid and popular style, and is admirably fitted both to please and to instruct readers generally.

*Gospel Ethnology.* By S. R. PATTISON. (R.T.S.) The primary object of the writer of this book is to show the relation which the gospel sustains towards Ethnology. This he does by giving representative instances of the acceptance of the gospel by all the races, and nearly all the families of mankind. The evidential value of such a collection of facts is obvious. The universal adaptation of the gospel to the needs of men of all nations is one of the strongest arguments in proof of its Divinity. This book furnishes a triumphant answer to those opponents of missions, who say that "it is absurd to suppose that the same ideas which are applicable to the accomplished European can be at all suited to the degenerate African."

The R. T. S. Library. Illustrated. *The Wit and Wisdom of Thomas Fuller, with a Brief Biography.* (R. T. S.) We are glad to find that the Tract Society are including in their library some of the standard works of our great Puritan Fathers. The present volume contains some of the principal writings of one of the most popular writers of his own day. It is not often that we get so much wit and wisdom put into so small a compass. The book deserves and will abundantly repay a careful perusal. The subject matter is both sound and weighty, and the style is peculiarly crisp and racy.

*Bible Class Primers.* An Exposition of the Shorter Catechism. Part I. By the EDITOR. (T. and T. Clark.) A clear and thoroughly Scriptural and interesting exposition of the first part of the Shorter Catechism.

*Specific Unbelief, England's Greatest Sin.* By ANDREW SIMON LAMB. (James Nisbet and Co.) An earnest plea in behalf of the Scriptural doctrine concerning the righteousness of Christ as the ground of the sinner's justification.

*Short Biographies for the People.* By VARIOUS WRITERS. Vol. IV. (R. T. S.) Eminently suited for its purpose of disseminating knowledge about great and good men of all ages amongst the masses of the people. We hope it will be widely circulated and extensively read. The series is in every way deserving of the praise that has been

bestowed upon it. The biographies are short and well written, and the subjects are selected in such a manner as to secure greatest freshness and variety. The volume is indeed a *multum in parvo*.

*A Misunderstood Miracle.* By Rev. A. SMYTHE PALMER, B.A. (Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey and Co.) This is a new and ingenious attempt to explain the difficult passage of the sun standing still in Joshua x. 12-14. The writer does not try to explain it away by denying the miracle altogether. He fully believes that a miracle did really occur. What he does is to supply a new interpretation of the passage which he thinks, and rightly thinks, will, if accepted, make the miracle more easy to believe. His contention is, that much of the difficulty in receiving the miracle has been caused by a mistranslation of the inspired narrative. The literal and therefore true rendering of the original words used, he says, would be "Sun be silent," and "the sun was silent." He then goes on to discuss the meaning of the word *silent* as thus applied to the sun, and shows that it was often used by the Jews of one who abstained from acting, so that the expression the sun was silent would come to mean the sun ceased to act. "But in what way?" asks Mr. Palmer. "Is it that he ceases to move or ceases to shine? Which is the more obvious and striking attribute of the sun, which we would expect to be referred to if such a command as 'desist!' or 'cease!' were addressed to him without further definition—his shining or his motion? My contention is that the sun becoming *silent* or *dumb* can mean nothing else so naturally and consistently as that it became *dark* or *obscured*." The theory as thus stated is novel and ingenious, and perhaps as probable as any of the others, which have been invented to explain what does not admit of explanation. If accepted, it would undoubtedly relieve us of a difficulty, and the author has certainly succeeded in adducing a large number of considerations and illustrations in support of it.

*Britain in History Ancient and Modern.* By MRS. ALBERT G. ROGERS. (J. Nisbet and Co.) The object of this book is to establish an identity between us and the lost ten tribes of Israel, and the writer adduces several facts which she regards as proofs *linking* Israel and Britain throughout the ages.

*Betelnut Island,* by JOHN T. BEIGHTON (R.T.S.) is a lively and graphic description of personal experiences and adventures in the Eastern tropics. It contains a good deal of useful information concerning the island and its inhabitants. We heartily commend it to all friends of foreign missions. The more books of this kind we have the better. Few things are more calculated to foster a missionary spirit than a knowledge of the lands and peoples to whom missionaries are sent.

*The Gospel in Nature.* Scripture Truths illustrated by Facts in

Nature. By Dr. McCook. (Hodder and Stoughton.) Dr. McCook, who is a diligent student of nature and a recognized authority in one department of natural history, is also a theologian and a preacher. In the volume before us he has drawn upon his vast stores of knowledge of the natural world, in order to illustrate and enforce important Scripture truths. The sermons are marked by considerable freshness both of thought and of illustration. Dr. McCook has a practised eye, which enables him to perceive analogies between natural facts and spiritual truths which would escape the observation of a less observant person. He "finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, and God in everything."

*One Thousand New Illustrations for Pulpit, Platform, and Class.* By REV. H. O. MACKEY. (Hodder and Stoughton.) The illustrations in this book are both new and good. They are derived for the most part from books of the day, and are generally based upon incidents taken from the histories of nations and from the biographies of great men. The topics illustrated include a wider range of subject than is usual in works of this class. The practical utility of the book is enhanced by exhaustive subject and textual indices.

*Miss Willowburn's Offer.* By SARAH DOUDNEY. (Blackie and Son.) This is an exceedingly effective and well-written story. The plot is slight, but it is worked out with no little skill, and the interest is thoroughly sustained to the end. Miss Patience Willowburn, who may be regarded as the heroine; Leslia, who is in many respects her opposite; and Dr. Vansittart, are all cleverly-conceived and powerfully-drawn portraits. The story is one of the best which has yet proceeded from the pen of this graceful and gifted writer.

*Goldengates.* By M. L. RIDLEY. (J. F. Shaw and Co.) This is a first-rate story for boys. The hero is a fine specimen of a manly young Christian. The manner in which he softened the hardness and won the affections of a proud and stern father by his patience and tenderness is well told. The book is thoroughly healthy in its tone, and shows what an important influence for good may be exerted by one boy who is governed by Christian principles, and who, without talking goody good, simply lets his light shine both in word and in deed.

Messrs. Macmillan send us two volumes of their new and admirable series of eminent statesmen. The first, *William the Conqueror*, by the one author who is admittedly past master on all questions of Norman story, Professor Freeman; and the second, *Cardinal Wolsey*, by Mr. Mandell Crichton; also the first two volumes of the new edition of Dean Church's charming *Essays*; a new edition of the *Letters of Charles Lamb*, by Rev. Alfred Ainger; and two or three volumes of poetry, especially Mr. Russel Lowell's *Heartease and Rue*. We are compelled to reserve fuller notices of them to future numbers.

